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IT BEGINS...



OH NO. WE'VE only just hit March and already, my year is ruined. I mean, come on – this is far too early for the deluge of awesome games to start, surely? My embarrassing backlog hasn't really improved thanks to a combination of *Destiny* RNG bullshit and my subsequent *Final Fantasy XIV* relapse, yet already we have *The Order: 1886* smashing photo-realistic moustache first into us to herald the coming of a gaming storm that Q1 simply wasn't built to weather. *Bloodborne*. *Final Fantasy Type-0*. *Battlefield Hardline*. *Project Cars*. *Resi Revelations 2*. Nobody has the time or money for this silliness, do they? We'll find out, I guess, after this Marchvember is over.

I'll be honest, though – this new-found love of March on the part of publishers concerns me a little. We've already seen our fair share of botched launches this generation and with March marking the end of the financial year, you have to imagine that some of these new releases could have used a little more time in the oven and will only be in our hands when they are in order to make an end-of-year spreadsheet look a less terrifying to investors. *Hardline*'s successful beta has taken the heat off *Battlefield* a little, but I can't see the next few weeks going by without *one* disappointment. Spoiler: it's not going to be *Bloodborne*.

I hope I'm proven wrong by an avalanche of awesome and either way, we've got plenty of kick-ass stuff going down *right now*. Find out everything you need to know about the likes of *The Witcher 3* and *Uncharted 4*; learn from my mistakes with our guide to getting your *Destiny* Guardians maxed out; discover which of *The Order*, *Evolve* and *Dying Light* failed to live up to hype and go behind the scenes of the best superhero game EVER MADE. It's all kicking off.

Enjoy the issue and I'll see ya online...

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UNCHARTED 4

Everything you need to know about Drake's return

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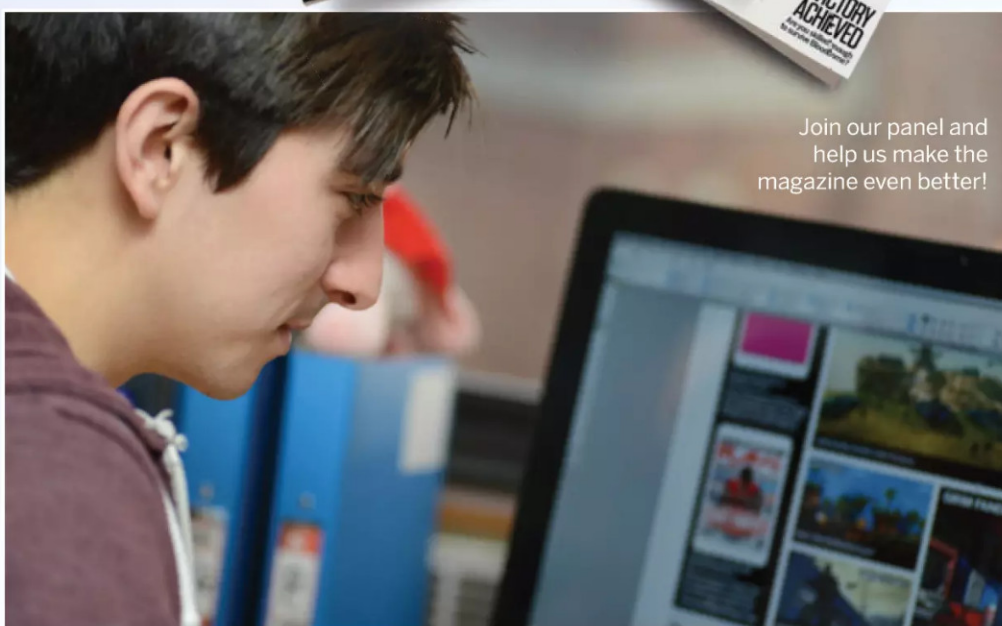
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UNCHARTED 4 THE ADVENTURE OF A LIFETIME

HOW THE LESSONS NAUGHTY DOG HAS
LEARNED, FROM DRAKE'S FORTUNE TO
THE LAST OF US, HAVE GIVEN BIRTH TO
THE PS4'S BIGGEST EXCLUSIVE

It is somewhat fitting that Naughty Dog appears to be framing *A Thief's End* as the conclusion to the *Uncharted* series. We say that because, as well as representing the culmination of Drake's story, the game will also provide an opportunity for the studio to pour everything it has learned over its 26 year history into creating the definitive *Uncharted*. In that sense, *Uncharted 4* may just be the apex of everything the studio has been trying to achieve with the series since it debuted back in 2007.

Indeed, after being introduced to *Uncharted 4* by Naughty Dog, there are some clear threads that can be traced through the preceding trilogy of *Uncharted* games and even *The Last Of Us* – elements that have been refined, expanded upon and reworked through each iteration. Combine that maturation of the studio and its ideas with the additional scope offered by making the generational leap to the more powerful PS4 and there's cause to be very

optimistic about what Naughty Dog can achieve with its latest project.

When we talk about Naughty Dog gradually refining mechanics and ideas, though, what precisely do we mean? Well, one of the developer's key strengths has been characterisation; its ability to give us a sense of a character's personality, their relationships and their back-stories, without resorting to lengthy and clumsy exposition. A simple line of dialogue; a glance in a cut-scene; a telling piece of body language; or even a moment of silence – these are the kinds of subtle flourishes with which Naughty Dog has been able to tell us so much.

That's something that Naughty Dog's been doing since Nathan Drake started quipping back in *Drake's Fortune* and has only got better at over the years. No doubt, that's partly down to the experience it's gained in terms of writing and storytelling, but it's also down to refining its technology to the point that it could produce the kinds



of moving scenes we saw in *The Last Of Us*. Its industry-leading motion capture capabilities, in concert with its technical ability to translate those performances in such a way that the subtleties of a character's expressions are not lost, has been vital creating characters that we care about, like Drake, Ellie and Joel. With the power of the PS4 at its fingertips, we should see Naughty Dog take gigantic leaps forward as it continues to work to harness Sony's technology in service of its storytelling.

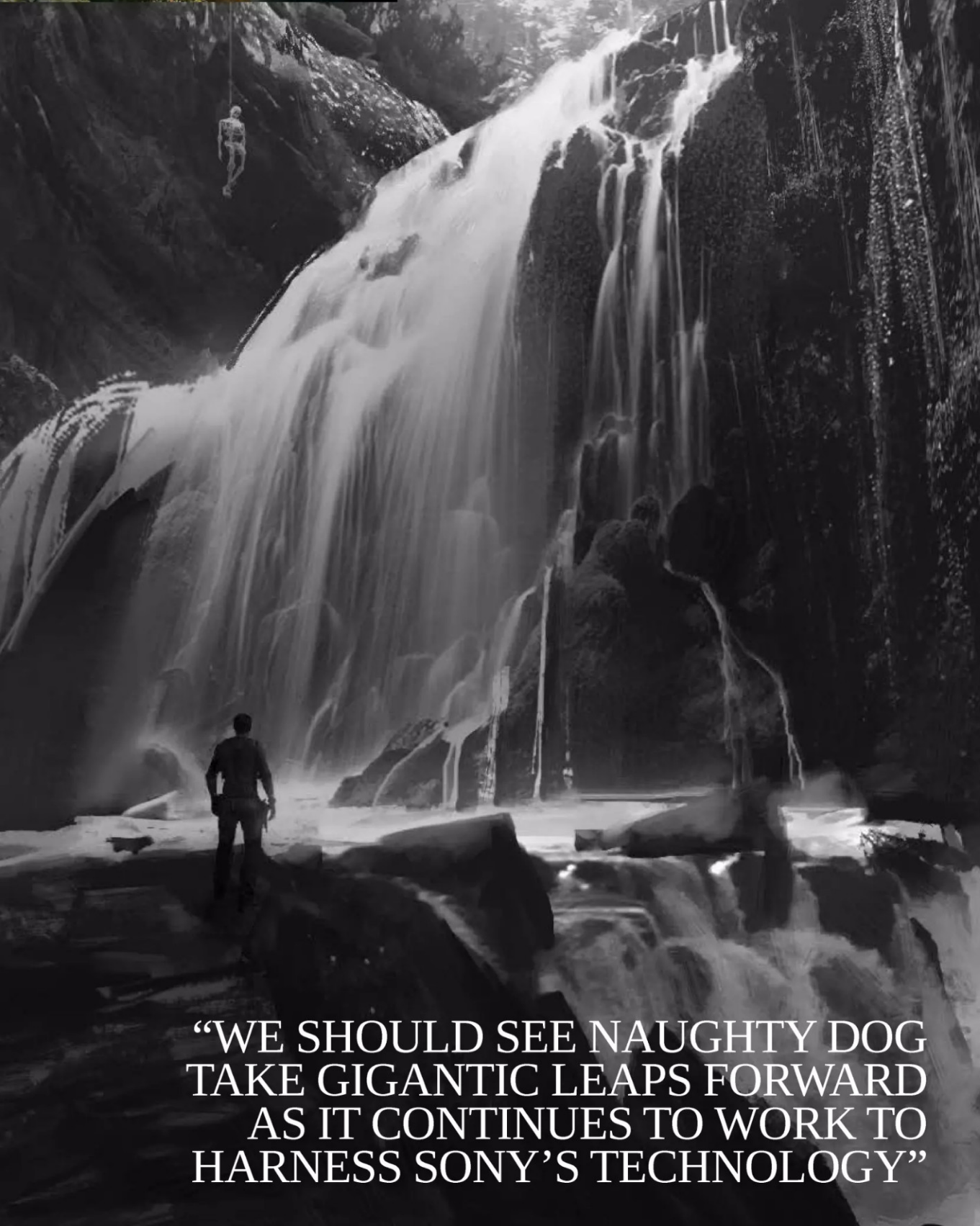
Leaving aside the technological aspect for a moment, there's another reason that Naughty Dog's characterisation is so good and that is because it understands that it's difficult to get a handle on protagonists if there aren't strong and diverse characters for them to bounce off of. "We give the same amount of love and care to developing all the secondary characters that we take with the main cast," Naughty Dog co-president Evan Wells explains. "We've long held that the best way to really get to know someone and see their personality is through their interactions with others," he continues. "That makes it crucial that all the secondary characters have the same depth and complexity to their personalities and back-story as the main cast". The idea that its necessary to develop your characters by having

them interact with each other explains why, in the first *Uncharted*, we had Sully and Elena accompanying Drake on his adventures. Naughty Dog continued to experiment with companion characters in the next two *Uncharted* games, with Sully and Elena returning and the likes of Chloe and Charlie Cutter introduced.

Clearly, the studio felt there was something more there, because it ended up building a whole game around the idea of having two

characters undertaking a journey together in the form of *The Last Of Us*. That game took the concept to a whole new level in terms of dialogue, interactions, story beats and mechanics. Early indications suggest that Naughty Dog will take what it has learnt from *The Last Of Us* and bring that over to *Uncharted 4* as we step into the shoes of Nathan Drake and set off treasure hunting with his brother Sam at our side. Indeed, Wells tells us that having those kinds of interactions in *Uncharted* has been a focus for some time. "It became a no-brainer to start making sure that at least one other character was around Drake as much as possible so the personalities could play off each other and provide additional insight into who they really are," he says. It's not yet clear how much of the game will be played with Sam accompanying us and we'd be surprised if he was anywhere near as constant a companion as Ellie in *The Last Of Us*, but Wells comments on *Uncharted's* penchant for providing Drake with a foil suggests he'll be a





“WE SHOULD SEE NAUGHTY DOG
TAKE GIGANTIC LEAPS FORWARD
AS IT CONTINUES TO WORK TO
HARNESS SONY’S TECHNOLOGY”

TECHNICAL ANALYSIS



1080P/30FPS

While Naughty Dog’s first big reveal of *Uncharted 4* was with a 60fps trailer, cynics were quick to point out that even *The Last Of Us* – an upscaled PS3 port – struggled to hold a steady 60 fps frame-rate. Although the studio said it was targeting this level of fluidity, it’s looking increasingly likely that the final game will be locked at 30fps. The game’s not a twitch shooter, fighter or arcade racer so this shouldn’t hurt the game too much. It might even be that we see an unlocked frame rate as in *Second Son* or *Tomb Raider*, hopefully with the option to lock to 30 if desired.

ANIMATION

To say that *A Thief’s End* is a step up from *Drake’s Deception* on an animation level would be a chronic understatement. Take picking up ammo, for instance – *Uncharted 3* had just two different animations for this, while *Uncharted 4* reportedly has over 60. Climbing, a core pillar of the game, takes this even further, to the point where Drake’s clambering animations in the new game apparently take up more memory than his entire movement library in the last one. Wow.

AI

You could see even from the PlayStation Experience demo that enemy intelligence had improved greatly, but we still haven’t seen the full extent of this. Guards work on proper patrol routes and line of sight to track Drake once spotted, meaning they can also lose him if the player does something crafty. Improved AI is also being applied to companion characters (his brother Sam likely won’t be the only one) to mean it feels less like dragging an idiot through a game (as it often can do with partner AI) and more like actually going on an adventure with someone else.

significant feature. Regardless, those moments in which we do see Drake working alongside another character – be that his brother Sam, Sully or anybody else – the strength of those interactions and the insight they can give us into the game's characters will only be enhanced by the studio bringing to bear the skills its developed experimenting with companion characters over the course of the *Uncharted* series and *The Last Of Us*.

Of course, *The Last Of Us* was far more than an opportunity for Naughty

successful with a game that's darker and more intimate. Don't get us wrong, *Uncharted 4* isn't suddenly become a dour and depressing dirge. It will retain that Summer Blockbuster feel and intersperse more serious moments with trademark levity. However, there's a sense that it is being tempered a darker edge and that Drake's brother is being brought in to further humanise Drake, to allow us to see a more vulnerable side. Consequently, we wouldn't be surprised to see one or two more intimate scenes to texture Drake's character, alongside

“NAUGHTY DOG KNOWS THAT IT CAN BE SUCCESSFUL WITH A GAME THAT'S DARKER AND MORE INTIMATE IN TONE”

Dog to finesse things it had already tried in *Uncharted* games. It was also an opportunity to experiment with new ideas. The starting point for that is its darker tone, its propensity to scale down towards the intimate, rather than expanding to the spectacular, as has traditionally been the case with *Uncharted*. “We thought people would appreciate what we were trying to do but we didn't think it would be as popular or sell as much as something like *Uncharted*,” Naughty Dog creative director Neil Druckmann tells us. “Luckily, we were proven wrong.”

With that success behind it, Naughty Dog knows that it can be

the cinematic high-speed chases, explosions and fight scenes that we all expect from the *Uncharted* series.

There's another way in which Naughty Dog is clearly bringing what it's learnt from *The Last Of Us* into *Uncharted 4*. While there's always been a combination of out-and-out combat and stealth in the *Uncharted* series, the transition between the two has always been pretty binary. In *The Last Of Us*, however, you could slip in and out of the two states far more smoothly, popping off shots at a few enemies from behind cover before slinking off to hide and taking out any stragglers in silence as they searched the area to see where

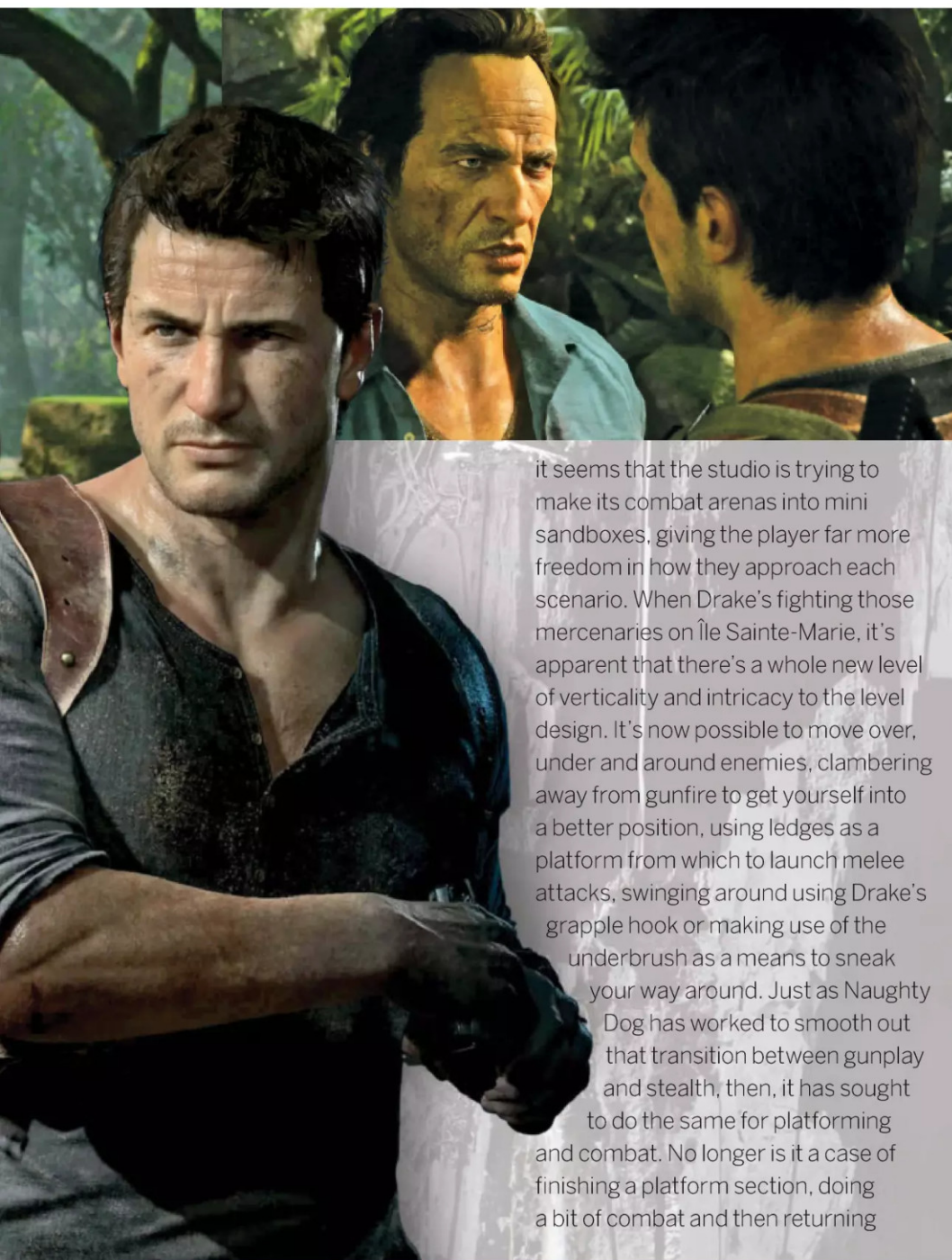


△×□ Realistic lighting can make all the difference – just look at games like *The Order: 1886* to see that.

you'd vanished to, for example. What we've seen of *Uncharted 4* demonstrates that this has been brought into *A Thief's End*. Enemies no longer remain rooted behind cover once you've engaged in combat, but will move around the area, making use of similar traversal abilities employed by Drake. Our hope is that this will help to give the game far greater scope when it comes to combat scenarios. With more fluid transitions between stealth and gunplay, as well as more proactive enemies who will search the area when you're in hiding, the game should provide the opportunity to play with your foes and environment in a far more interesting way.

Playing into that fluid approach is the more open design Naughty Dog appears to be bringing to *Uncharted 4*. In contrast to past games,





it seems that the studio is trying to make its combat arenas into mini sandboxes, giving the player far more freedom in how they approach each scenario. When Drake's fighting those mercenaries on Île Sainte-Marie, it's apparent that there's a whole new level of verticality and intricacy to the level design. It's now possible to move over, under and around enemies, clambering away from gunfire to get yourself into a better position, using ledges as a platform from which to launch melee attacks, swinging around using Drake's grapple hook or making use of the underbrush as a means to sneak your way around. Just as Naughty Dog has worked to smooth out that transition between gunplay and stealth, then, it has sought to do the same for platforming and combat. No longer is it a case of finishing a platform section, doing a bit of combat and then returning



△○×□ More open areas offer mini sandboxes in which to do battle. Well, if you want. You could just run...



△○×□ Drake's character model is rich in detail, from realistic skin to cloth physics on his famed half-tuck.

DRAKE'S VOYAGE

Charting the places Nate has visited on his journey so far

- | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------|
| Uncharted 3 (Flashback) | 1. Colombia |
| Comic | 2. Arctic |
| Fourth Labyrinth | 3. Bhutan |
| Golden Abyss | 4. Panama |
| Fourth Labyrinth | 5. Ecuador |
| | 6. New York |
| | 7. Egypt |
| | 8. Santorini |
| | 9. China |
| Eye Of Indra | 10. Indonesia |
| Drake's Fortune | 11. Amazon |
| Fourth Labyrinth | 12. Ecuador |
| Among Thieves | 13. Istanbul |
| | 14. Borneo |
| | 15. Nepal |
| Drake's Deception | 16. England |
| | 17. France |
| | 18. Syria |
| | 19. Yemen |
| A Thief's End | 20. Île Sainte-Marie |



HOW DRAKE STACKS UP

Considering that it has become Sony's flagship brand, you'd think it'd be the best-selling of the bunch, right? Not so, and some unlikely rivals aren't all that far behind Drake, either...



to the platforming. Now, Drake's athleticism also becomes a vital tool when engaged in combat, his climbing abilities a way of gaining an advantage over his opposition. Not only should that ability, necessity, even, to move around more freely make combat far more compelling, it's also a way of bringing the thrilling kineticism of the set pieces for which *Uncharted* is famed into scenarios that have traditionally been far less exciting.

Returning to those famous set pieces for a moment, they are in many

ways emblematic of what's made the *Uncharted* series stand out. It is spectacular, ostentatious, delights in dropping the jaw of its audience. It is for that reason that Sony has used Naughty Dog's games as standard bearers for the PS3, positioned them as titles that show what the console can do. Each *Uncharted* game has set the technological benchmark for the PS3, with *The Last Of Us* signing off the generation by pushing that console to its limit. Part of the excitement around *Uncharted 4*, then, is that

Naughty Dog will do the same with the PS4. It is a studio that's proved it has the skill to push the technology it is working with to new levels and for that reason it will be fascinating to see what it can do with a piece of hardware that's got as much power as the PS4.

Exciting as that is, though, we have to say that it is the aforementioned changes being made to *Uncharted's* gameplay that have really got our attention. It's heartening to see those changes because, without them, our excitement regarding *Uncharted 4*

△×□ The same man, looking in three different directions. This means *Uncharted 4* will be great.



“NAUGHTY DOG HAS A BLACK BELT IN MAKING ACTION GAMES, AND THIS COULD BE UNCHARTED AT ITS APEX”

would be tempered. After three main *Uncharted* entries, the series need those kinds of innovations, because a game that's as linear as those just wouldn't cut it anymore. We've played that game before; we need an *Uncharted* that offers something new. The opening up of its combat arenas; the apparent desire to give us the tools to tackle enemies in more creative ways; the creation of a combat system that leverages the liberatory speed of movement that defines Drake – those are the things that make *Uncharted 4* sound like it could make the game a special PS4 exclusive.

As a sequel, though, we of course want *Uncharted 4* to keep at its core the things that made the series appealing in its first place. In that respect we have cause to be confident.

From its work with various companion characters, to dialogue, storytelling and combat, we've seen a studio that's evolved and matured as it's gone on. Elements that have been established and developed in the *Uncharted* series have been brought to *The Last Of Us* and explored in different ways, with the refinement of those ideas seemingly set to benefit *Uncharted 4*. The hope, then, is that if *A Thief's End* does prove to be the series' conclusion, it will be an *Uncharted* produced by a studio that has honed its skills to the point of mastery, not to mention a studio that has seen the series through its life. Naughty Dog has a black belt in making action adventure games, so there's every chance that *A Thief's End* could be *Uncharted* at its apex.



EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE WITCHER 3 WILD HUNT

We hunt down every detail on CD Projekt Red's epic RPG to find out why this looks to be the series' biggest entry

1 YOU'RE ALL WELCOME

CD Projekt Red is well aware that *The Witcher 3* is going to be the first *Witcher* game that many people have played, being as this game has the kind of profile that its niche progenitors could only dream of. If you're one of those first-timers, you need not worry. The developer has said that you don't need to have played the previous *Witcher* games, or even know the first thing about their star, Geralt, in order to jump in on the third entry; the story will be stand-alone, meaning that all are welcome.

2 IT IS GOING TO BE HUGE

By all accounts, the open world in which the game is set is going to be *massive*. It'll be dense, too, with hundreds of points of interest littered across the landscape, each with a story to tell, and a quest of some kind for you to complete. If you want to get lost in *Wild Hunt*'s landscapes, wandering through forests or up mountain paths and seeing what adventure you find on the way, the developers say you'll easily find over 100 hours worth of gameplay to keep yourself occupied.

3 IT'S A BIT LIKE MONSTER HUNTER

One of the most appealing things about *Wild Hunt* has to be the large monsters that you'll come into contact with throughout the game. What's cool about those encounters is that they're not scripted. You'll quite literally have to hunt your prey and use tools like the Tracking Bolt, which leaves a blood trail behind your foe, in order to pursue them. If the hunts are as brilliant in practice as they sound in theory, that process of closing in on your target should only make the final encounter feel even more epic.

4 COMBAT IS BEING OVERHAULED

While it'll no doubt retain its RPG routes to some degree, it seems like combat will take a step towards the action genre in this latest entry of *The Witcher* series. The game's developers have talked about revamping the combat system to make it more fluid – that sounds good to us, so long as it doesn't end up feeling like every other action game. One cool new introduction is that your stance changes to reflect how relaxed Geralt is in combat as a way of telegraphing how tough nearby enemies are.

5 THERE ARE MORE SIGNS

Seing as this is an RPG, Geralt's sword-wielding skills are of course supplemented by his use of magic. There were five 'signs' – or spells, if you prefer – in the first two *Witcher* games, and *Wild Hunt* will double that number, giving us ten signs to play around with. You can increase the power of your signs by upgrading your magic abilities.

6 PREPARATION IS KEY

Alchemy is a big part of *The Witcher* series, with the brewing of potions ahead of time being key to success in combat. Crafting concoctions that will boost abilities and aid you in battle will also be important in *The Witcher 3*, though there have been changes made to the system. Being able to imbibe potions mid-battle will make the game less reliant on you knowing what's coming ahead of time, and will give you the ability to grant yourself a quick on-the-fly buff.

7 THEY MOSTLY COME OUT AT NIGHT

You best be in before the street lights come on... by which we mean, you better be wary of roaming around *Wild Hunt*'s world at night. The reason we say that is because the creatures and beasts that inhabit the world will become more dangerous once the sun disappears over the horizon. We are probably going to stay in the local tavern once night comes, order a few ales and wait until it all blows over, but then again, we are cowards.

8 IT'S ALIVE!

The sense that you're in a huge world should be enhanced by the citizens that populate towns and villages across the world. CD Projekt Red says that each of its inhabitants will have their own business to attend to and will go about their day naturally. They can also respond to you in different ways – drawing your sword, for example, may leave those around Geralt cowering in fear, or you may encounter someone spitting at you on the streets purely because of the fact that you're a witcher.



ΔOX□ This witch appears to be one of the many characters that could be friend or foe, depending on the actions you decide to take.



ΔOX□ Look! Geralt can make money bags levitate. This slayer of monsters truly is a talented man.



ΔOX□ The city of Novigrad looks pretty spectacular and is one of the key locations we're looking forward to visiting.



ΔOX□ If you needed evidence that the world of *The Witcher* can be pretty bleak, check out this poor dude...or what's left of him

9 NOVIGRAD IS MASSIVE

The biggest town in *Wild Hunt* is the city of Novigrad, which has around two thousand inhabitants. Its four districts are comprised of warehouses, guilds, inns, temples, brothels, and the largest port in the area, making it an impressive sight to behold. As you'd expect, it's also an excellent place to buy supplies – ask around at the fish market and you might just find some black market stuff, too.

10 THERE WILL BE CONSEQUENCES

Everything you do in *The Witcher 3* can have significant consequences. Taking one quest, for example, could close down the opportunity to take another. You'll also have to make decisions that have an impact on how things play out. You could, for example, end up fighting a character if you take one approach, or end up working with them if you choose another. Being able to shape how things play out is always a big thumbs-up in our book.

11 CLIMB EVERY MOUNTAIN

The ability to jump and climb might not seem like a big deal, but it's the first time you've been able to do that in a *Witcher* game. Those new mechanics should make exploring the game's world more gripping, allowing you to scale mountains, to give one example. Speaking of exploring, don't forget you've got a horse you can ride, and that you can now attack enemies while on horseback.

12 WHAT'S 'THE WILD HUNT'?

The title doesn't just refer to the fact that you'll be doing some hunting. The Wild Hunt is an old myth about a ghostly group of hunters whose appearance was said to signal a catastrophe of some kind. *The Witcher 3* draws on that mythology, with a mysterious army called The Wild Hunt invading the Northern Kingdoms. Dealing with that threat is going to be the focus of the game's story.

13 TAKE TO THE SEAS

For the first time in the series, you'll be able to get out on the waves in your very own sailboat. Be careful though, because the game's developers say that you might find yourself getting scuppered by sea monsters or by a more tedious natural phenomenon: stormy weather. If you do end up without a ship, though, Geralt now has the ability to swim, meaning you can search the depths for sunken treasure.

14 IT'S A NOVEL DEVELOPMENT

If you're new to *The Witcher*, you might not be aware that the games are based on a series of novels by Polish writer Andrzej Sapkowski. While the games are based on the novels, they don't tell the same story. In the words of level designer Miles Tost, the *Witcher* games "take place after the ending seen in the books, so the stories we're telling here and in past games are our own, but they are heavily based on the source material."

15 THERE'S A NEW STAR

This will be the first entry in the series in which we get to take control of a character other than protagonist Geralt. However, it seems that Ciri's sections will be relatively short, with CD Projekt Red's Tost telling us that "these moments are a narrative tool that we use to communicate the story and characters rather than being another way of exploring the world."

16 IT WILL EASE YOU IN

CD Projekt Red told us that *The Witcher 3* will have an prologue to ease players into the game, introducing them to the world. The prologue will task you with hunting a griffin, teaching you about how you can find clues in your environment and by interrogating locals. Despite being an tutorial area, it will retain an open world element, encouraging players to wander off the beaten path and find side-quests.

"EVERYTHING YOU DO IN THE WITCHER 3 CAN HAVE SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES"

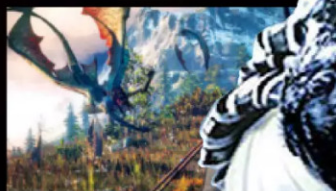


△○×□ Expect to meet a wealth of offbeat and eccentric characters roaming the wilds.



MEET THE CAST

A few friendly faces amid a sea of beasts



GERALT

Witchers are hunters which are trained from childhood to deal with the monsters that populate the land. Though they do have special abilities after completing their training, few trainees survive the process. Geralt is one such survivor, and the protagonist of the series.



CIRI

A former apprentice of Geralt, Ciri has mystical powers that will prove key to stopping The Wild Hunt, as told in 'the prophecy'. We know at least part of *The Witcher 3* will involve trying to track down Ciri and that there will be a small sections in which you get to play as the witcheress.



YENNEFER

Her appearance in *The Witcher* games has been limited to flashbacks in *The Witcher 2* up until this point, but Yennefer has had a far more prominent role in novels and will in *The Witcher 3*. Like Geralt, Yennefer has had a mentor-like relationship with Ciri, training her in magic.



TRISS

A skilled healer and mage, Triss has been featured in the previous two *Witcher* games. Her relationship with Geralt has been a key focus of *The Witcher's* story, with Triss being his primary love interest. In the novels, Triss has a sister-like relationship with Ciri.

THE BESTIARY

A selection of things that will die by your hand



LESHEN

A guardian of the forest that's emerged in the wake of humanity's pillaging of the forest's resources, the Leshen can summon animals to help it in battle. Like other supernatural monsters, it is immune to steel, so you best use your silver sword if you want to take it down.



GRIFFIN

It builds its nest atop mountain summits and hunts in the highlands, so you'll likely find the Griffin in one of those two locations. It is highly territorial, so you best watch out when you're in its hunting grounds. Keep on your toes when it takes to the air during combat.



WEREWOLF

You know the deal: werewolves only come out at night and are especially prevalent during a full moon. Try and take werewolves out before they call other wolves to their aid – silver bombs are particularly useful in that regard, temporarily blocking the creatures' regenerative powers.



FOGLET

Appearing wherever thick fog is present, watch out for Foglets around swamps, rivers and lakes. Foglets can take on a spectral form. When they do so, use the Aard sign to force them back into solid form and then you are free to chop them down with your blade.



17 TO SCALE OR NOT TO SCALE?

Should developers scale enemy levels so that they become more powerful as you do, or should they keep enemy levels consistent, meaning that some areas are too dangerous until you've done a bit of leveling up? *Wild Hunt* opts for the latter approach. The reason? CD Projekt Red argues that scaling takes away from your sense of achievement – mastering a legendary skill feels better when you're using it to take down foes that you were simply unable to deal with before.

18 THERE ARE NO INVISIBLE WALLS

The *Skyrim* approach of 'if you can see something, you can travel to it' is being taken here; there will be no invisible walls to impede your progress. Indeed, CD Projekt Red says that it is designing its world with the intention of encouraging you to explore it. It wants to foster a sense of curiosity with its players and as such, it will allow you to wander off while in the middle of a story quest and get involved with whatever else you fancy.

19 ALL DLC IS FREE

The Witcher 3 has 16 pieces of DLC planned and it will all be free with no strings attached. In an open letter, CD Projekt Red co-founder Marcin Iwinski expressed distaste for the way DLC is now handled. "Right after release, lots of tiny pieces of tempting content materialise with a steep price tag attached," said Iwinski. "Haven't we just paid a lot of cash for a brand new game?"



△OX□ Early indications are that CD Projekt Red is going to use the PS4's power to impress us all.



"CD PROJEKT RED WANTS EVERY SINGLE QUEST TO FEEL ENGAGING"

20 THERE ARE LOADS OF ENDINGS

We've already talked about how *The Witcher 3*'s story and quests will adapt to the choices you make, but perhaps the best way of getting a handle on just how flexible the game's narrative will be is via this simple fact: there are at least 36 different endings. Being able to have that kind of impact on the game's story is pretty cool, in our humble opinion.

△OX□ Confronting monsters like this beastly deer-thing is one of the things that really excites us.

21 IT'S SEXY TIME

Like the *Mass Effect* series, the *Witcher* games are known for having multiple characters that you can romance using your charm. Unlike the *Mass Effect* series, there have only been heterosexual romance options on offer so far. Maybe that will change in *The Witcher 3*? Possibly, but as CD Projekt Red is faithful to its source material, perhaps not.



22 THERE'S PERMADEATH

CD Projekt Red is including the option to play *The Witcher 3* with permadeath, meaning you could be 100 hours in, make a mistake and find yourself having to start all over again. Permadeath would undoubtedly add a level of intensity to each combat scenario, but we're not sure we can deal with the crushing blow of losing tens of hours of progress.

23 NO FETCH QUESTS

One of our pet hates in videogames is the inclusion of boring side quests that are there for no other reason than to pad out the game. CD Projekt Red says it is trying to avoid that, and it wants every single quest to feel engaging and worthwhile in its own way. We hope that's not all PR bluster, because we are pretty fed up with crappy side-quests.

24 THERE'S A BEARD PACK

There's one piece of DLC that we think deserves special mention. That is the beard and hairstyle set which, as you can guess, allows you customise Geralt with a bunch of different beards and haircuts. When you've got mustachioed wonders like *The Order: 1886* to compete with, these kinds of facial hair enhancing packs are a must.

25 WHY IT'S DELAYED

The Witcher 3 release date has now been pushed back to 19 May. "Nearing the end of our work, we see many details that need to be corrected," said CDPR. "When we release the most important game in our studio's history, we must be absolutely sure that we did everything we could to limit any bugs to a level that will allow you to enjoy the game thoroughly."



GET READY FOR HOUSE OF WOLVES

With Destiny's latest expansion soon to hit consoles, you'll want to be level 32 in order to fully enjoy the new content. Let our veteran Guardians share their wisdom to make maxing out your Light level and perfecting your loadout a breeze

GET TO LEVEL 20

The first step of the journey is to reach the level cap. To do this, all you really need to do is play through the story missions in order, at least attempting them on Hard whenever the difference is no more than one level. If you're planning on going through with alt characters, be sure to leave your best low level Rare weapons in the Vault, as this will make it easier for your other guys to speed through. Start picking up and completing Bounties as soon as you are able to – including Eris Morn's Hive-specific ones if you have The Dark Below DLC – as these offer great XP boosts and reset daily. If you're efficient with Bounties and difficulty selection, you should hit 18 or 19 by the end of the story – just grind out a Strike or two to cap out. If you have friends with higher level characters, having them sherpa you through content you'd never be able to clear alone can make this easier.

THE 20+ GRIND

Welcome to big school. Your first priority is to gather Legendary gear, and the easiest way to do that is to rack up as many Vanguard and Crucible marks as you can through Strike Playlists, Daily and Weekly activities and public events (for Vanguard) or PvP play (for Crucible). Ideally both, since the weekly cap of 100 on each kind of mark limits how quickly you can progress. Once you hit rank two in standing with either Vanguard or Crucible, you'll be able to purchase purple gear, although helms and body armour will both require Commendations, obtained through levelling the appropriate discipline beyond level three. With that in mind, you should try to start amassing Strange Coins so you can buy an Exotic head or body from Xûr. Remember, all basic Legendary gear will require Ascendant materials to upgrade.



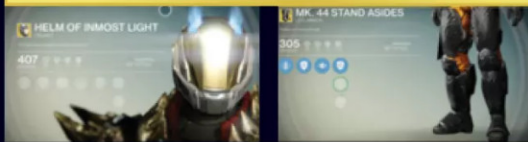


CHOOSE YOUR EXOTIC ARMOUR

It will take time to reach the point where you're choosing Exotics rather than using what you're lucky enough to get. But if you have the option, these are the best pieces to fill your Exotic slots for each sub-class

TITAN
WARLOCK
HUNTER

STRIKER



HELM OF INMOST LIGHT

If you like to use Fists Of Havoc a lot (and who doesn't?), having additional perks and survivability while using it can't hurt. It frees up character perk slots too, which is handy.

MK.44 STAND ASIDES

These are great for wrecking shit in the Crucible. Shoulder Charge is a one-hit kill on anyone not rocking an overshield, so extending its duration is a great way to rack up easy kills.

DEFENDER



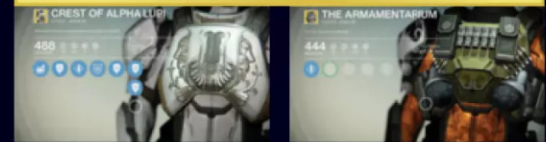
HELM OF SAINT-14

Blinding enemies that dare to stray into your Defender's bubble is amazing both for emergency use and for stalling waves by popping it on an enemy spawn point.

THE GLASSHOUSE

Extending the durations of both Blessing and Weapons Of Light gives you even stronger support for your team – particularly useful in Raids and high-level Weekly activities.

GENERAL



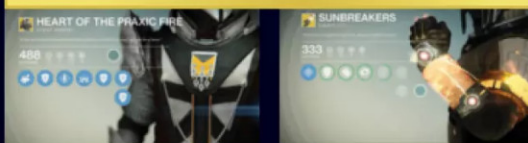
CREST OF ALPHA LUPI

Quicker revives are great – you can literally just run over a fallen ally while holding Square and they'll revive as you pass. Spawning more Orbs is great for support, too.

THE ARMAMENTARIUM

If you can get your Discipline high enough, your grenade energy will replenish quick enough to make having two grenades worthwhile. Also, twin lightning rods provide great area denial.

SUNSINGER



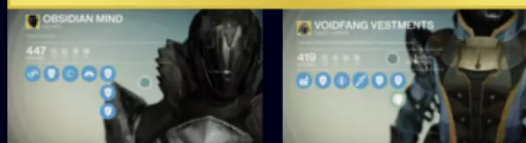
HEART OF THE PRAXIC FIRE

With maxed Discipline, Heart Of The Praxic Fire will allow you to sling grenades more or less non-stop while Radiance is active, which is handy both in Crucible and Strikes or Raids.

SUNBREAKERS

Solar grenades work great for area denial, both in the Crucible and in general play (enemy AI makes them actively avoid the radius) so why wouldn't you want them to last longer?

VOIDWALKER



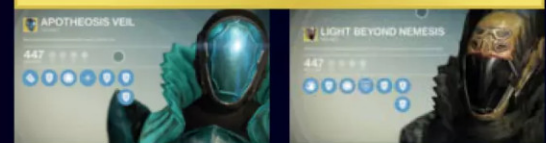
OBSIDIAN MIND

Voidwalkers like to abuse their Super as much as possible, and this is perfect for doing that. Take this into the first part of Crota's End and watch how quickly you get Super energy...

VOIDFANG VESTMENTS

If you've spent time in the Crucible, you'll have seen how well enhanced Axiom Bolts can seek out targets. Its perk, which lets you spawn with full grenade energy, makes this a PvP winner.

GENERAL



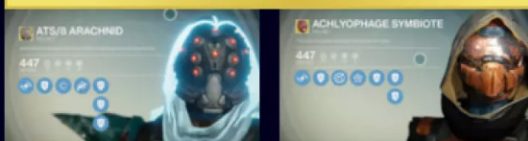
APOTHEOSIS VEIL

While less useful for suicidal Sunsingers, the ability to recover your life upon triggering your Super is something that can and will save your life – both subs can make good use of this.

LIGHT BEYOND NEMESIS

This is the equivalent of Crest Of Alpha Lupi on the other two classes, making it a solid choice for any Warlock that likes making more Orbs for their team or picking fallen friends up.

GUNSLINGER



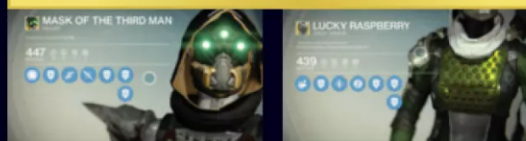
ATS/8 ARACHNID

This awesome-looking and spiderish Exotic basically turns your Golden Gun Super into a sniper rifle, allowing you to pick off distant targets with it easily on large PvP maps.

ACHLYOPHAGE SYMBIOTE

Why stop at three Golden Gun shots when you can have four? Whether you're piling damage onto Atheon or just rinsing a PvP team, this will add to your damage output significantly.

BLADEDANCER



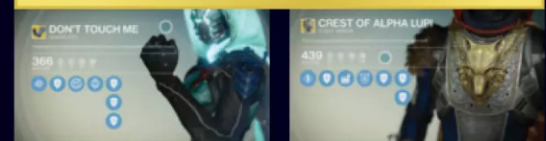
MASK OF THE THIRD MAN

Extra melee speed and reduced cost on Super attacks makes this the go-to Bladedancer Exotic. It certainly helps that it looks badass, but it's also helps this sub do what it does best.

LUCKY RASPBERRY

Mask is the only Exotic that fits with the main reason Bladedancers exist – to mash R1 for some free kills. Still, improved Arcbolts and a free grenade on spawn is nice too... right?

GENERAL



DON'T TOUCH ME

These arms might not look like much but their unique perk can be a lifesaver. If you're the kind of Hunter that likes to get in close, letting enemies melee you for free invisibility is smart.

CREST OF ALPHA LUPI

Another mention for Crest, only because it's so useful. Both subs have *more* useful alternatives, sure, but you shouldn't be peeved if this is what you have to wear to hit 32.



...AND YOUR EXOTIC WEAPON

PRIMARY

AUTO RIFLE



SUROS Regime is best in class here, although Monte Carlo has its fans as well. After the early nerfs to AR critical damage, a well-rolled Legendary may compete in terms of damage, but the health regen from SUROS can be a life-saver.

SCOUT RIFLE



MIDA Multi-Tool is currently your only choice, but it is at least a decent one – movement speed buffs are particularly welcome in Crota's End when trying to avoid infinity Thralls, but your Exotic slot could perhaps be put to better use.

PULSE RIFLE



As of the time of writing, pulse rifles still aren't great. If you've got the skill to plant all three shots of a burst in the head then Red Death offers a more reliable version of SUROS' health regen, but still... expect a buff soon, then we will talk.

HAND CANNON



Truth be told, you can't go wrong with *any* Exotic pistol right now. Hawkmoon offers mad damage to those who can count buffed bullets well, Thorn's damage over time effect is brutal and The Last Word is a nice slice of Wild West wonder.

OTHER



Vex Mythoclast. That's what this category was created for and while only obtained from Vault Of Glass on Hard mode, it's still among the best weapons in the game, period. No Land Beyond can be a beast in PvP in the right hands, mind...

SPECIAL

SNIPER RIFLE



Ice Breaker's regenerating ammo makes it worth carrying around if only to fuel your other Specials, although there's no doubt that some missions instead call for a little Patience And Time. Both are solid options – take what your preference and/or the burn modifier calls for.

FUSION RIFLE



With Murmur available to everyone who has the The Dark Below DLC, it's hard to argue for either Plan C or Pocket Infinity here. In Crucible, you can at least buff Plan C's range to kill from half a map away, so that's got to count for something, right?

SHOTGUN



Even Legendary shotguns can kill any unsuspecting Guardian with a single (and arguably, cheap) blast to the face, so why waste a perfectly good Exotic slot on one? Invective can be given decent range but sadly, The 4th Horseman is awful. Buff, please?

HEAVY

MACHINE GUN



Thunderlord is okay, but it's still outclassed by Iron Banner LMG, Jolder's Hammer. Super Good Advice is good for suppressing fire but not all that great once hits start landing. A good fear weapon, then, but a Legendary will do you better in terms of damage.

ROCKET LAUNCHER



Gjallarhorn is the answer. There has been no question, but still... Gjallarhorn is the answer. Gjallarhorn is life. Truth essentially gives free kills in PvP, but the almighty G-Horn will long reign supreme as THE launcher in Destiny. Also, it's arguably the best-looking Exotic.

PRO TIP



Be sure to visit Xûr every weekend – he's in the Tower from 9am Friday to 9am Sunday – to see what Exotics he has for sale. Even if it's gear that you don't particularly want or need, there's usually something worth grabbing. In a game this organic, today's worst weapon could be tomorrow's best, so stock up!



UNDERSTANDING LIGHT



If you're going to hit 32, you'll need to be aware of your Light stat and the targets you're looking for, as well as the crucial difference between Light as a statistic and your Light level. Basically, Light level 32 requires a total of 144 Light in stats from all four pieces of equipped armour, meaning you're looking for a full set with 36 Light on each. The only options that fit the bill here are new or upgraded Exotics, Crota's End Raid gear and the gloves from the most recent Iron Banner PvP event. On your way to 32, there are a few other Light targets (most notably Light level 30, so you can go into the Nightfall

without damage penalties) so it's worth running through the Light offered by other options. Blue (rare) gear from PvP and Vanguard Playlist rewards offers more Light than dropped equivalents, so that should be the first thing to shoot for after hitting level 20 – both options reward Marks, which you can use to kit yourself out with Legendary gear anyway. Old Legendary equipment has a maximum of 27 Light per piece (and is no longer available), old Exotics (also no longer available) and Vault Of Glass Raid gear have 30, new Legendary gear goes up to 33, while only those items listed previously have 36.

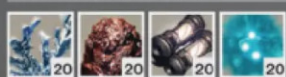


UPGRADING YOUR GEAR

You're going to need several things to max out your armour and weapons, with precise requirements depending on the item in question. Here's the breakdown...

LOCAL MATERIALS

MATERIAL EXCHANGE



Every upgradeable object in the game will require a decent supply of one of the game's four primary resources, each tied to a different location in *Destiny*: Spinmetal from Earth, Helium from the Moon, Spirit Bloom from Venus and Relic Iron from Mars. These materials can be found and farmed in the relevant location whilst you are on missions or patrol, bought from either Crucible or Vanguard vendors (you get 20 units of any material for 10 Crucible/Vanguard Marks, which isn't too bad a deal) and come from rewards for the Daily Heroic quest based on where it takes place. Get loads in.

GLIMMER

11153

Destiny's standard currency. If you're running low, there are several useful farming spots to abuse. The Exclusion Zone mission on Mars is a popular one (use Resupply Codes, kill waves of Cabal, die or return to orbit and repeat), while a similar trick works on the end of The Dark Beyond mission on the Moon. This is probably the best option now Black Wax Idols are a currency themselves with Eris Morn – get to the Hive waves at the Temple Of Crota, pop a Black Wax and kill the torrent of enemies. Leave at least one of the elites alive, die, repeat. You can simply go to orbit and return if you mess up.

GEAR-BASED MATERIALS



Weapons all use Weapon Parts, meaning they're easily shared between multiple characters. Armour, however, uses a different item for each class, making it a little trickier. The only way to get these is to break down other items, with the amount you receive being equivalent to the broken item's quality. High-level activities frequently offer a good supply of blue stuff to break down, while the Glimmer farm spots all furnish you with gear to deconstruct as well. You can always grab something from a vendor to break down if you're only a few items shy of an upgrade.

SHARDS/ENERGY



These come in three flavours – Ascendant, Radiant and Exotic. All Legendary gear bar Crota drops need Ascendant materials, which are the most common of the three – these come as rewards for the Daily Heroic mission, Nightfall missions, Public Events and opening purple Engrams. New Crota Raid gear needs its own Radiant materials, currently only obtainable from the Crota's End Raid itself. In both cases, Legendary gear can be broken down to offer Radiant or Ascendant materials. Exotic Shards are earned by breaking down Exotics or from buying them from Xûr.

EXPERIENCE

AVAILABLE BOUNTIES



Obviously you'll need to actually level the gear through use, although several things can help speed this along. Bounties are particularly useful, plus there's the Nightfall buff (25% bonus to all experience/rep earned after clearing the Nightfall) to consider. If you don't want to use things until they're at least slightly leveled, just equip them when turning in Bounties then go back to your standard gear. You can even quickly switch to different gear after completing a high-level activity and before the 30-second timer begins – experience isn't rewarded until then.

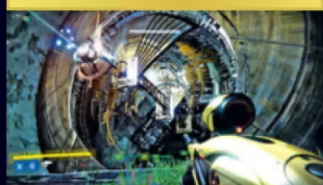
W A-RAIDING WE WILL GO

Now you're all geared up, it's time to hit the Raids. You'll want to be 27+ for Vault Of Glass and 30+ for Crota's End, although friends might be able to aid you through at least the early stages of either before you reach the desired level. Here's a quick overview of what to expect...

VAULT OF GLASS

The armour is now redundant and the weapons have been superseded but this is still the quickest way to earn Ascendant materials. Well, once a week, anyway...

THE DOOR



Phase one involves keeping Praetorians off the three plates – left, middle and right – as the Spire is forming. Split into three evenly levelled teams and guard them all, calling dangerous Praetorians so others can help if needs be. If you have a decent sniper, you can help people on other plates, too. Hold the plates for a few minutes and the door will open.

CONFLUXES



After making your way through the tunnels and grabbing the first chest, this annoying section is next. The Templar will summon forces to attack one, two and then three confluxes – simply spread your team left, mid and right (similar to the plates in the first area) to defend them and kill Vex before they get close, and watch out for Fanatics. Then the real fun begins...

ORACLES



Watch where the glowing orbs appear as they ping into the arena – these are the Oracles. You'll want to kill these as fast as possible as failure to do so will mark you, meaning you need to run over the glowing plate in the middle to avoid being wiped out by the Templar. More Oracles will appear in each wave, so spread your team out around the arena to catch the trickier ones.

TEMPLAR



After the Oracles are dealt with, a Relic will spawn in the middle. One player grabs this and starts smacking Harpies to build Super – when it's full, use its Super to take down the Templar's shield, at which point everyone else unleashes hell on it. You can stop it teleporting by having someone stand in the glowing ring, but Minotaurs will spawn if you do.

LABYRINTH



Up to the left of the Templar arena is a hole in the wall – jump up in and carefully drop down to reach the Gorgon Maze. Here, sneak through while avoiding the gaze of the roaming Gorgons. Don't shoot, double-jump or sprint or you'll attract their attention. The exit is on the far side of the large sloped rock to the back, but keep your eyes open, as it's easy to miss.

CROTA'S END

The Moon raid is a simpler affair than Vault, with fewer phases and most of them based on simply murdering waves of Hive. Still, there are a few tricky moments and it can be easy to get lost at the start...

ABYSS



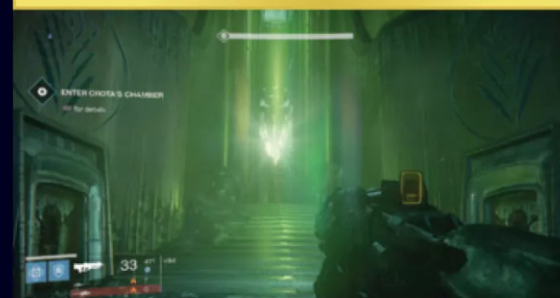
Form the bridge by standing on the platform then cross and drop into the Hellmouth. Here, Weight Of Darkness will constantly be building to impede your movement, but can be removed by chilling near the glowing lamps for a while. They'll explode after being activated, so keep moving – fight your way along the lamps to reach another bridge plate near the flooded area. Activate it and get to high ground, killing Thralls until the Ogre(s) appear then take them down. Stay alive and the bridge will form – run into the light to move on.

BRIDGE



Place two Guardians on each of the three plates to form the bridge, then drop the Swordbearer when he appears. Only the sword carrier can cross the bridge so have someone pick it up and run over, quickly dropping the Gatekeeper before the sword vanishes. They should just stay safe until two other people can repeat the process and get over. With three across, get off the plates on the starting side and place the guys who are over on their pads instead, repeating the process in reverse to get everyone over. Kill waves, win.

THRALLWAY



Have one person (ideally with Gjallarhorn) take care of the two Shriekers that spawn in the hall while everyone else does a mad sprint and jumps past the Thrall in order to make it to the closing door at the end of the corridor. If one person can get in, the door will then open up again so that everyone else in your Fireteam can grab the precious loot in the chest. If it's already closed by the time you reach the last arch, don't cross into the room – simply wipe and try again, and keep wiping and trying until you have your chest.

RAID TIPS



Nobody to run Crota with? Drop in solo and check the door on your left. If the lamp is on, grab the free chest. If not, wipe and try again.



The Deathsinger only offers her rewards once a week regardless of difficulty, making her even more of a bitch than she already was.

GATEKEEPERS



After jumping across the vanishing platforms, open the door at the end and fall back to the hallway to snipe the first Gatekeeper. Then, run to the left platform and stay on it to open the portal and send two people through to clear it out while the rest guard the plate to keep the portal open. Once the Gatekeeper goes down, one person must grab the Relic at the back and cleanse (L1) any marked Guardians. Head back out and round to the right hand plate – get the portal open, send Relic holder and another in to repeat the process while one high-level Guardian heads to the middle to defend the conflux from waves of Minotaurs. Once both Relics are out, have the holders guard the rear side of each portal to smash Minotaurs that emerge and everyone else defend the conflux from other threats until your rewards pop.

ATHEON



Go hide somewhere until the boss teleports three random Guardians to either Mars or Venus. Guardians left behind must open either the left (Mars) or right (Venus) portals so the teleported people can return, while clearing exploding Supplicants as best they can. Inside, one person grabs the Relic and leaps down into the middle with a jumping R2 attack while the other two focus on quickly picking off the string of Oracles that spawn. Relic holder must cleanse the Oracle team periodically or they will go blind. Once all Oracles are down, head through the portal and to the platform between the two gates. Relic holder holds L1 to create a permanent protective shield while everyone else focuses fire on Atheon. Have a Defender pop a Weapons Of Light bubble behind the Relic bubble and the buff will speed things along.

DEATHSINGER



Drop down and toss AOE grenades either side of the crystal on the roof to aggro the two Wizards above (you can see them moving from underneath them, so its easy to see where to aim). Run past the enemies to the two towers on either side and pick off the respective Wizards, then run inside the chambers to clear the Shriekers in each room. You can approach this part by either going at each one with all six members or split into two groups of three, but the former tends to work better. When both are down, the centre room will open and Ir Yut becomes vulnerable. Clear out Knights until she begins her liturgy, then quickly rush the middle room and hit her with *everything* you've got from Gjallarhorn rounds to melee hits. If you can drop her in time, simply clear out the rest of the trash to reach the final stage.

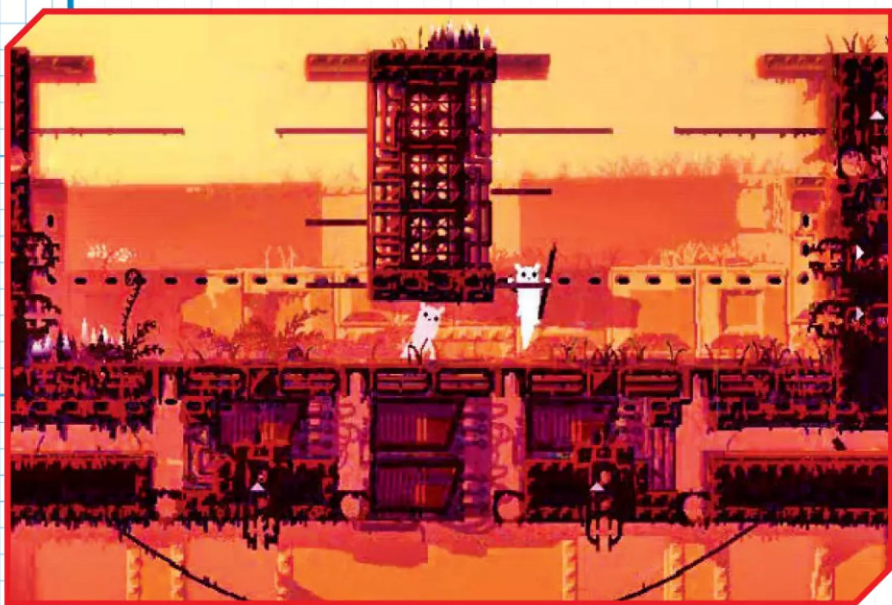
CROTA



Huddle your team by the crystal to active waves of enemies coming from either side – carefully take them down (there's no health regen without the Chalice from in front of Crota) and converge on the left side. One person (ideally with Ice Breaker) should focus on the Knights that spawn in the left tower, while everyone else drops the Swordbearer. Once somebody has the sword, everyone else needs to pound Crota with whatever they have to drop his shield – use primary/special weapons first and have the sword carrier move in to wail on Crota while he's down then get to safety as he rises. Then, if there's time, smash him with heavy rounds to get a second lot of sword hits before it vanishes. If anyone dies, Crota's Oversoul fills the sky, so batter it as quickly or you'll wipe. Repeat this process until the big guy goes down.

INDIEVELOPMENT

Our indie expert Paul Walker-Emig delves into the exciting and strange world of indie gaming to pick out the best of what's coming to PlayStation

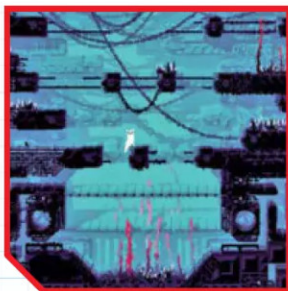


WITH ITS BEAUTIFUL 16-bit inspired pixel art and incredible animation, **RAIN WORLD** is a game that you want to play as soon as you look at it. When you start to find out what the game actually is, that desire to get your hands on it is only intensifies. You play as a slugcat (which looks exactly as it sounds) who is living in a bleak, industrial, post-disaster world, in which it is almost constantly raining. When the rains do let up, you must venture out in order to find food, returning to your den to hibernate before the rain falls once again.

Complicating your hunt for sustenance are the hostile creatures who want to make you their dinner. To avoid them you must employ a mixture of stealth and fast-paced platforming, using your maneuverability to clamber above, below and around your pursuers in intense cat-and-mouse chases. As well as being a survival game – and a rather tough one, according to the game's developer – *Rain World* also has a story to tell. In keeping with the game's open nature, it has an adaptive

△○×□ There have been teases that it's possible to get yourself a little slugcat family in *Rain World*.

△○×□ When you experience *Rain World* in motion, you get to see slugcat's detailed personality.

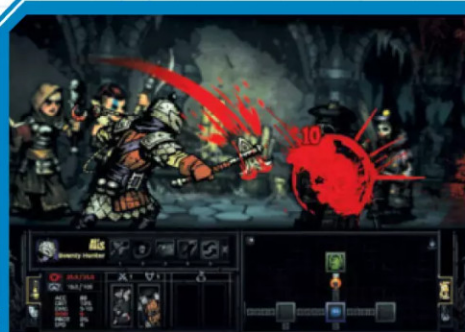


narrative that will change depending on how your attempts to survive in *Rain World*'s harsh landscape play out.

From pixelly to painterly, **TO LEAVE** is another lovely-looking game that is set to hit PS4 and PS Vita. You control a character called Harm, who, oddly, spends all his time hanging on to the top of a flying door. Actually, maybe it would be more accurate to say you control a flying door that has a boy called Harm hanging off its frame, but we digress. The purpose of each level is to get to the end within the time limit, collecting glowing orbs that regenerate your time reserves as you progress. The game tells a melancholy tale about Harm trying to leave behind his life, though there seems to be a hopeful undercurrent in that his

search for the better life, he remembers what drives him forward, even in the face of multiple setbacks.

Moving on to something more lighthearted, **GUNSPORT** is a spectacularly silly-looking multiplayer game coming to PS4. The set-up is that, in the future, nations like Neo Tokyo and Neo USSR no longer settle their disputes through war. Oh no. Instead, they resolve their beef via the 'World's Game': Gunsport. Played one vs one or two vs two, *Gunsport* is described as being a bit like volleyball, but with guns. One interesting twist is that the longer the ball is in the air, the more points you will get when you eventually get it into your opponents territory, meaning the stakes rise the longer rallies go on. You are



DEV DIARY Red Hook is developing *Darkest Dungeon*, a 2D RPG for PS4

We have been working around the clock to support our recent Early Access launch. It's been an incredible week, but a tiring one. The response was fantastic, and consequently we've found ourselves buried under a mountain of key requests, backer support, and of course, bug reports. Good problems to have, but given the eight week crunch leading up to the launch itself, we're all starting to feel the burn.

Our next task will be to create a roadmap outlining our path towards full release. We're excited and grateful for the support we've received and can't wait to start adding more features and content to the game.



limited as to how much you can shoot, so you have to pick your shots carefully and make sure you and your teammate are in sync. Indeed, developers Necrosoft say that communication between teammates is key to success, not least because you are able to pull off coordinated team attacks. We're hoping this one can join the ranks of the excellent multiplayer games we've already got on PS4, such as *Nidhogg* and *Sportsfriends*. Unlike the latter, though, we're pleased to see *Gunsport* will support online multiplayer.

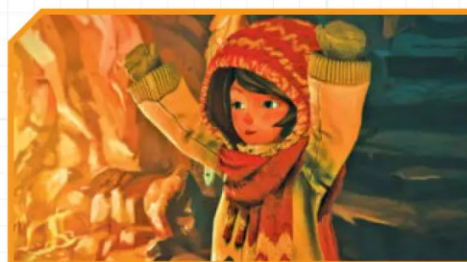
There probably won't be any guns in the rather gorgeous **SILENCE**. In announcing that *Silence* will be coming to PS4, developer Daedalic seems to have dropped 'The Whispered World 2' suffix, presumably in an attempt to disguise the fact that it's a sequel and to avoid putting off those who haven't played the first game on PC. We don't think that not playing *The Whispered World* will present a problem, because

"GUNSPORT IS DESCRIBED AS BEING A LITTLE BIT LIKE VOLLEYBALL, BUT WITH GUNS"



△OX□ We hope that *Gunsport* turns out to be the next great multiplayer PS4 game.

△OX□ *Silence* dev Daedalus is a studio that has a talent for creating beautiful looking games.



that game told a self-contained story and this sequel, with an older Noah and a new character in the form of his little sister Renie, looks distinct enough to consider this a game set in the same world, rather than a straight-up sequel. The strongest element of the first game was unquestionably the beautiful art style in which its dreamlike fantasy world was rendered and early indications are that *Silence* will be just as stunning. There are one or two elements that *Silence* can improve, however – puzzle design and voice acting. If *Silence* proves to address those weaknesses, then we have a great adventure on our hands.



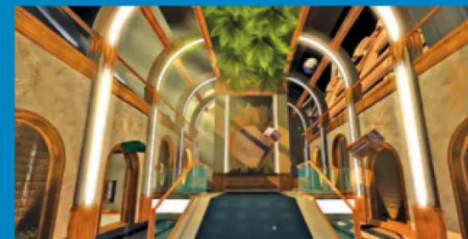
FUNDED TIMESPINNER

PLATFORMS: PS4, Vita
ETA: November



Hitting its PS4 and Vita stretch goals means that Lunar Ray will now be able to bring its Kickstarter-funded game, *Timespinner*, to consoles. The game is a 2D Metroidvania title in which you play as Lunais, a woman with the ability to control time. Embark on a revenge-fuelled quest on the empire that killed Lunais' family and use her time-manipulating abilities to evade enemies and solve puzzles.

WISHLIST TACOMA



It's not so much the game itself that makes us hopeful it will come to PS4, because we hardly know anything about it at this stage. Rather, it's the pedigree of the studio that's making it that makes us eager for a PS4 version. Developer Fullbright's last game, *Gone Home*, was so good, that we'd happily empty our pockets for their next title. No platforms have been announced, but we're pretty confident there will be a PS4 version.

IF YOU LOVE... CASTLEVANIA: SYMPHONY OF THE NIGHT



Like exploring an interconnected, labyrinthine castle, chopping down enemies and dealing with brutal difficulty? Then we suggest you try *Rogue Legacy* on PS4 or Vita.

YOU'VE GOT RED ON YOU

Over the course of a fight, the blood that pours off both fighters (assuming it's a decent ruck) paints them in internal muck. It's really not all that pleasant...



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FLOURISH HIM!

Depending on what character variant you pick, an element of their design – part cool little effect for players and part hint for observant opponents.

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Mortal Kombat X

Test your might



GRAPHIC VIOLENCE IS pretty much the twisted, shattered backbone of the *Mortal Kombat* franchise, but something has changed. Now, in an era where visuals are only getting more lifelike by the day and games are growing ever more complex, players are in direct control of some of the most horrific acts ever committed in gaming. The difference between *Mortal Kombat* and other games, however, is the disconnect between input and outcome. A tap of the melee button in an FPS will likely result in a quick, lethal stab, while even a skull-shattering *Sniper Elite* headshot is guided to its location by the player's true aim. Here, though, an arbitrary button sequence can lead to one of the most

gratuitous and graphic body horror sequences you will have ever seen – whether you meant to or not, you just spilled 1080p innards *everywhere* and broke your opponent to the degree that they could quite easily be removed from the character select screen. They are never coming back from *that*, after all. Seriously, we actually had to apologise to opponents after seeing what our wandering fingers actually did to them. In some cases, it's almost a bit *too* far.

In a way, it's the logical progression from the last game's X-Ray special moves, effectively mid-match Fatalities that would blatantly leave their victims crippled forever, yet they managed to fight on regardless. This mechanic raised the bar in terms of what a body could take and still carry on

fighting, and NetherRealm left itself nowhere to go but to significantly worse places when it comes to actually ending matches. Even X-Ray moves in *Mortal Kombat X* are more brutal than most of the Fatalities the series has offered up over the years; it's one thing to see Sub-Zero pull off a digitised head to leave a dangling hand-drawn spine, but quite another to see Cassie Cage perform a twist on her dad's Package Check groin assault only to have an internal camera zoom right into the inner workings of the body and show testicles literally burst on impact.

This infatuation with all things violent has got to make *Mortal Kombat* a hard game to market, right? Apparently not. "I understand why you ask that question, but because *Mortal Kombat* has

"PLAYERS ARE IN DIRECT CONTROL OF SOME OF THE MOST HORRIFIC ACTS IN GAMING"

KLASSIC KCHARACTERS

The cast (or should that be kast?) is a great mix of familiar faces and new blood. Expect DLC and character variants to fill in the blanks left by absentees.

TESTI-KILLS

We weren't expecting to see Cassie Cage perform her dad's Package Check, but we *really* weren't expecting an internal shot of the victim's balls exploding...

ΔΟΧΔ Jumping at someone who is electrically charged isn't the smartest thing to do. You're better off eating hammers.

△×□ Raiden's variations are among the most extreme, effectively turning him into three unique characters.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?



See every broken bone and torn piece of flesh in more detail than ever!



Three variants of each fighter means it should be easy to find someone you like.



Loads of newcomers have been added, in case you were tired of the classic kast.



MK9 and *Injustice* have clearly helped shape this into a legit fighting game.

such a long legacy, there's a lot of recognition of the franchise," explains marketing manager Brian Goodman. "In a way, all the work for the brand has already been done. Most people – even those who aren't familiar with games in general – know what *Mortal Kombat* is. Those who are familiar get it even more; they know what the game stands for. The hardest part about working on the game, really? Getting new people interested, and making each new experience feel fresh."

In ways, that's an unenviable task – fighting games by their very nature are something that players will either be interested in or not, and it

scaling means diminishing rewards on your full super gauge if you land your X-Ray after a long string as opposed to landing it flush on a lucky counter hit. But whether you're after efficiency or highlight reel combos, or indeed you just want to hurt virtual people with minimal knowledge of the core systems, NetherRealm has you covered.

"It's all about creating features that appeal to new gamers," says Goodman. "In the last few games, we've really taken steps to supply more single-player content – it's an easy road into the game, it's more forgiving, and you don't have to be incredibly skilled at the game to get a lot of

"X-RAY SPECIALS ALLOW YOU TO EVISCERATE YOUR OPPONENT AT ANY POINT IN THE ROUND"

would take a hell of an effort to tempt an audience that doesn't care for the genre into playing its most bloodthirsty champion. Or so you would think, at least. But once again, it's the X-Ray moves that play a game-changing role. Fatalities were a body-breaking reward for only those good enough to claim supreme victory, yet X-Ray specials allow you to eviscerate your opponent at any point in the round – anyone with a modicum of skill can land these bloody Super attacks, especially since they can easily be combo'd into with any character. Some have it easier than others, sure, and damage

enjoyment out of it. We've always tried to make the game as accessible as possible whilst still delivering a very deep and technical, core fighting game." The studio has proven a clear talent in this field, actually – while we'd struggle to place any NetherRealm title on the same technical pedestal as a *Street Fighter*, *King Of Fighters* or *BlazBlue*, nobody in fighters does solo content better. Unlockables, interesting new modes, story content... there's just loads to do before you even think about syncing a second controller or heading online. "We found that the evolution of



story mode from *MK* through to *Injustice* became more and more integrated," Goodman explains. "You feel like the whole story is seamless. It's more interactive that way – the story plays out as one long interactive thing."

That's music to our ears, because as nonsensical as it was, *Injustice*'s story mode set a new benchmark for the genre – cut-scenes fuse with the actual fights to create a flowing and oddly engaging narrative, as opposed to *Street Fighter*'s incidental pre-match chats or *Guilty Gear*'s mind-boggling removal of fights entirely in favour of telling a story nobody really understands or cares about. Expect a suitably ludicrous storyline that introduces familiar faces to all-new ones, with blood-soaked battles so perilously close at any given time that you can't afford to put the controller down for a second.

It's also worth discussing the interesting decision to offer three unique variants of each playable character, simply because this move



△○×□ Shooting blood out of his feet is one of Kung Lao's strangest new special attacks. Or it would be, if it was a thing.

effectively triples the roster – these aren't exactly subtle changes and in the most extreme cases, they can even allow the same fighter to fill three different roles. Kano, for instance, can be tailored for zoning play, grappling or even ghetto rushdown, while other characters use this admirable new mechanic to honour those who are left on the cutting room floor – Kitana, for instance, has access to Jade's staff and even some of her signature attacks in her Mournful variant, the name alone suggesting this is as close to the legacy character as we'll get. It's a smart way of doing things, to be fair. With this new feature, the roster needn't be filled with palette swap ninjas and joke characters – these now fill one third of a character slot, and those who lost a loved one in the jump from *MK* to *X* will hopefully be able to at least find a solid cosplay replica of their main. Or, as we've found, they could just embrace one of the new characters, because pretty much all of them are great fun to play.

For perhaps the first time in the series' history, we've had more fun with new guys and gals than we have with the old guard. But NetherRealm has all bases covered. If you like one of the returning characters, they can still be played like they always have, albeit with a few new tricks depending on which variant you pick; if you're mourning the loss of a favourite (bear in mind that the whole roster hasn't been revealed yet), chances are someone has been handed down a few classic moves you want to abuse; if you've lost interest in the series in recent years, one of the new characters could yet pique your interest and pull you back in if you're in any way into fighting games.

The trio of variants is a double-edged sword, though – as much as it opens up the game for different players and styles, it has to be a balancing nightmare, right? "It's always a challenge, but it's a challenge we're worthy of taking on," Goodman tells us. "Balance is actually something we've always been pretty good at, and it's something we put a lot of attention towards. It's a difficult thing to achieve, and we knew going in that three character variations would make it even more challenging."

Strangely, and this is telling of NetherRealm's past offerings, we're not so bothered about balance right now. After hours of butting heads with old characters and newcomers alike, we're not actually all that worried about that. Our hands-on time didn't highlight one character as OP, nor did it leave us feeling like our fighters were lacking. The balance that Goodman mentions appears to be there, so we just end up looking longingly at the modes we don't have yet. Faction War, where your brawler represents their team in an online war against the rest of the world; Towers, where unique effects shape the outcome of each match, from bombs lobbed into the arena by Sektor to low gravity that make juggle combos easier; Story mode, where all the crazy shit happens. We want to understand you, *Mortal Kombat X*. There's more to you than the 1080p entrails and familiarity of your cast lets on. You could be the best fighter on PS4, and we'll find out soon enough.

Luke Albigés

MORTAL KOMBAT X is being slashed, beaten, broken, torn and pummelled into shape by NetherRealm Studios. Rip more info out of www.themortalkombat.com

WHAT YOU'RE SAYING...

everything I have seen so far has impressed me. Especially the 3 variants for each character.

@higgie_baby

really looking forward to it :)

@dj_christy

I hope they invest more in the servers this time around. *MK9*'s was a disaster.

NewbBeginnings

Who cares about Kitana and her terrible costume? Mileena all the way!

Artyom Bogomaz

“THIS IS MORE A SURVIVAL SIMULATOR THAN ANOTHER QUEST TO SINGLE-HANDEDLY SEE OFF SOME GREAT AND ALL-POWERFUL EVIL”

ETA TBA | PUB SONY | DEV WILD SHEEP | TWITTER @PLAYSTATION

Wild

The Neanderthal simulator pokes its head out of the cave



LIKE A PARTY-SIZED box of chocolates that's lost its contents insert, *Wild* is a tantalising-yet-unknowable mystery. On the outside, it's all chocolately possibility and delicious caramel swirls. But as everyone who's ever accidentally wretched up a mouthful of marzipan will attest, appearances can be deceiving. Whether *Wild* will turn out to be a delicious praline treat or a treacherous toothpaste-and-cat-hair disaster is still far too early to predict (the game doesn't even have a release date yet), but that doesn't mean we can't indulge in some informed speculation, dusted with an occasional pinch of guesswork.

The reason we have so few hard facts about *Wild* is that, aside from a two-minute trailer and a lone, measly announcement post on the PlayStation blog, developer Wild Sheep (a new studio headed by Michel Ancel, of *Rayman* and *Beyond Good And Evil* fame) have been keeping details of the game under lock and key, and then hidden those locks and keys in a safe somewhere on the surface of the moon. Which is a shame, because what we've seen of this PS4 exclusive has our fancies tickled.

First off, it looks mutedly pretty. Not stunning, not suck-the-breath-out-of-your-lungs impressive like *Skyrim* or *Dragon Age*, but more like *Oblivion*'s Cyrodiil on a cloudy day (in a playable area the size of Europe, say the devs). It's a fantasy game, of sorts – there are animals to control and align yourself with, stone god-heads dotted about the rolling landscape, and at least one huge giantess who has made her home inside a tree trunk – but the setting predates your run-of-the-mill knights in armour trotting from town to town on horseback flogging unwanted loot. *Wild*'s humans all dress like cavemen and the only weapons we see are crude swords, spears, a bow, and a wooden whittled stake. No +10 Staffs Of Epic Lightning here – although the tribal population *do* seem to have a sort of religious relationship with a race of skeletons garbed in bone head dresses, one of which we observe apparently holding court around a campfire, and another immortalised as a huge underwater statue sitting on a throne, as a band of comparatively puny humans paddle on past.

What you'll be using this rather meagre toolkit for is less clear. We've seen some combat, with a

△×□ Developer Michel Ancel has stressed that we can play as a trout (exciting, we know) but we want to play as whatever the hell *that* is.





ΔΟΧ□ It's more stone and sticks rather than iron and steel, which is actually quite refreshing.

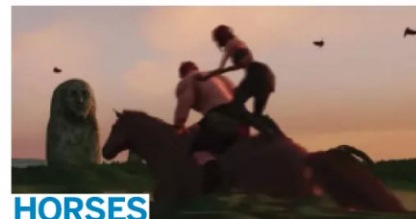
PETTING ZOO

Wild is, we are assured, going to be filled with animals both friendly and otherwise, most if not all of which will be playable in some form or another. Which animals exactly, you ask? What a delightfully prescient question...



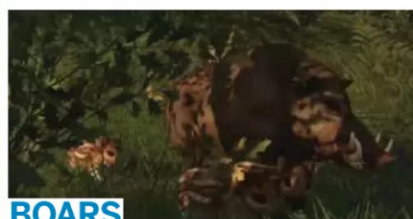
WOLVES

Wolves crop up frequently in the trailer, hunting a wild boar and awkwardly climbing up onto the head of one of one of the brawny human characters. What does this mean? That there will be companion animals in *Wild*, as well as those you can inhabit, we reckon.



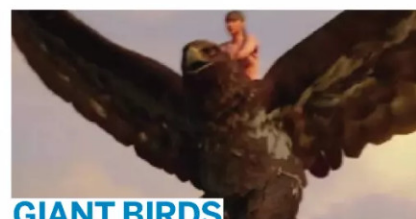
HORSES

Not sure about this one, as the trailer shows characters riding one across the open plane. We can't help but think that wouldn't it be more efficient just to possess the horse and canter off to your destination without shuttling two lugs about on your back as well?



BOARS

In the trailer, we spy these wandering in the forest, and later in the final segment rushing alongside a wolf, bird and human player towards a meeting with a giant bird. This suggests that *Wild*'s open world may have a more dynamic system of fauna than other games.



GIANT BIRDS

Told you. This beast swoops in right at the end of the trailer with a lady clinging to its feathers, but instead of attacking our motley crew of man, boar, wolf and (regular-sized) bird, it perches on a big rock while the party appear to fall down and start worshipping it.

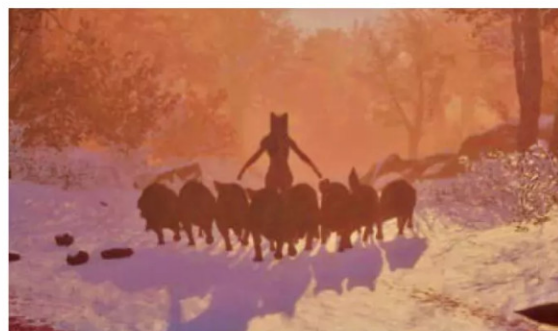
WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

▲ You can take control of a whole raft of animals, from tiny fish to wolves.

□ You can approach the game however you want to; ultimately, it is all up to you.

✕ The game's visual style, while not pushing the bar too much, looks great.

○ We can't remember the last time we got to play as a caveman, so colour us excited.



ΔΟΧ□ We have seen some pretty neat landscapes so far, which is nice and all, but we want to see more.

hairy hunter-gatherer type creeping up on a pack of wolves and pinging arrows at them off-screen, but we also catch a glimpse of a female character clambering up the branches of a tree to pinch some bird eggs from a nest. We've not gambled since we lost that intern in a game of high stakes underground poker, but if we were gamblers, we'd suggest that this is more a survival simulator than another quest to single-handedly see off some great and all-powerful evil.

Whatever your motives, the devs stressed in the game's announcement that they wanted players to have as many choices open to them as possible. "How you approach the game is up to you, what you do, and even what you are – it's all up to you," says Ancel, a bit nebulously. So, while we know that every creature featured in the game's trailer will be playable (Ancel was keen to stress that, yes, the game will include a playable trout), the meat and bones of *Wild*'s "interactive opportunities that feel endless" (Ancel, again) are yet to be fleshed out.

The evidence, then, leads us Holmes-like to the conclusion that *Wild* is still quite a way off its release. While the trailer pitches a novel open world experience, it's also obviously rough around the edges; the animations look clunky, footage of actual gameplay is sparse, and there's practically no sound beyond the stirring backing music. *Wild* might not even be the game's final name (which would save us puzzling over the styling of the name, which is downright weird).

So, we are left, as so often is the case with such reveals, with more questions than we had coming in. But under-reported as it is, *Wild* has piqued our interest. If you've had your fill of *Dragon Age*'s mages and castles and high fantasy whatnot, keep your peepers swivelled on this.

Rich Wordsworth

WILD is running around in the wilderness with Wild Sheep Studio. Check the website for more details:
www.wildsheepstudio.com/

KNIGHT TIME

Nero is a member of a order of Knights dedicated to protecting Earth from demons. The star of the previous *Devil May Cry* games, Dante, attacks the order and its leader, Sanctus. After he and Nero have a scuffle, Dante leaves the scene. Thus the events of *Devil May Cry 4* are sparked into motion as Nero track downs Sanctus' assailant on the demon-infested island of Fortuna.

ANATOMY OF... NERO

With two *Devil May Cry* games coming to PS4 this year, fans should be well catered for. After *DmC: Definitive Edition*, Capcom will be releasing another remake in the form of *Devil May Cry 4: Special Edition*, starring Dante's stand-in, Nero...

DANTE'S DOPPELGÄNGER?

While Nero does share some similarities to Dante, he is more serious and less laid back. In terms of combat, Nero plays differently to Dante, in that there's none of the weapon or fighting style switching that the latter is famed for. You can 'rev' Nero's sword to set in on fire and increase the power of his attacks, though, which is awesome.

DEVIL BRINGER

At the start of *Devil May Cry 4*, Nero is ashamed of his demonic right arm, the Devil Bringer, and tries to hide it. However, it does allow him to pull off acts of badassery. The Devil Bringer can be used to summon a ghostly arm that can perform powerful attacks in combat, such as Buster, which allows Nero to perform grapple moves on demons, and Snatch which allows you to drag enemies towards you.

SMOKIN' SICK STYLE

Taking on *Devil May Cry 4* isn't for the faint hearted. As with other games in the series, it is renowned for its difficulty, demanding technical skill from its players. For those who love that kind of challenge, though, then you will not be happy with just beating the game, but will want to get those SSS ranks by mixing up your attacks, fully utilising the Devil Bringer.

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WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

▲ A orchestral score that wouldn't feel out of place in *Theatrhythm Final Fantasy*.

□ A battle system that fuses all the best bits of the traditional console JRPG.

× A ludicrous story about love and aliens that we can't wait to be amazed by.

○ It has small and violent pigs as enemies. What more could you want?

ETA 2016 | DEV MIDGAR STUDIO | PUB MIDGAR STUDIO | TWITTER @EOEGAME

Edge Of Eternity

Every Cloud has a silver lining

PS4

FINAL FANTASY VII is practically a perfect game. We all know this. But if you don't fancy picking it up from the PS Store and playing it for the eighth

time later on this year when it comes to PS4, there is a studio dedicated to giving you an alternative. The aptly named Midgar Studios has relaunched *Edge Of Eternity* on Kickstarter – a game that wouldn't exist without *Final Fantasy VII*'s influence.

It's all a bit familiar, yet different where it counts. As much as everyone's banging on about a complete remake of *VII*, it's nice to see games that try and move the traditional JRPG to the side a little – slightly innovating here and there, but not bringing in ideas that just won't stick (did someone say *Lightning Returns*?) and to that end, *Edge Of Eternity* is a like a 'Best Of' JRPG album, taking the world design from *Star Ocean*, the battles of *Grandia* and the character design and 'feel' of Square Enix's flagship franchise.

The story is as fantastically nonsense as you'd expect, and we love it; it's about space aliens invading a planet, and slapping a virus on the population to turn them into subservient metal monsters, in hopes of total annihilation. Daryon – the game's spiky-haired and presumably moody hero – leaves his hometown, plagued by his old friends and family, now turned into

metallic monsters. He sets out to journey though the world of Heryon, undertaking a quest that'll reveal his origins, and end up with him saving the world.

Midgar Studio is working with the Symphonifilm orchestra to record a live OST for the game, and it's a shame we can't send you all a USB stick with the soundtrack on it, because it's like John Williams is channeling his inner Nobuo Uematsu. Violins, violas, trumpets, cellos – they all mimic the 32-bit tracks that've been stuck in our heads since we first changed discs between saves on the PSone.

The world design which we have seen so far comes off a little bland, but tech demos tend to be more concerned with mechanics than with trying to wow you with stunning vistas and interesting dungeons. Still, rolling plains peppered with ruins and a dungeon coursing with electricity aren't new and amazing places, and the game's 'space' setting seems cautiously domestic so far. You *do* see the Earth hanging, suspended in the sky at one point, though.

The battle system makes no secret of its influences – the game shamelessly boasts 'ATB' above the charge meter, and it seems to have an alternate display that lets you watch the action unfold *Grandia*-style, with the one scrolling bar and your character icon racing enemies to the 'Perform' line. Character

animations look a bit wooden, but that seems to be a tribute to the stoic battle animations of JRPGs gone by. The enemies all seem uniquely brought to life, though – at least they're more than just them mess of polygons you see in PSone JRPGs.

Speaking of enemies, so far we've seen tiny violent pigs, something that looks like a glowing Boldore from *Pokémon*, and an angry lich-like thing. Isn't that all you need to know, really? The game also makes up its own silly magic names – instead of Thunder/Thundara/Thundaga, it's Thunderift, Thunderstorm, and so on. And it's not a mage that casts them – it's some character who uses a flute.

So far, so JRPG. Except it isn't, not really. Midgar Studio is actually a French developer practically operating on a tiny budget – not a Japanese juggernaut with the enough cash to let the game take a beating. Midgar Studio has a lot riding on *Edge Of Eternity*, and if the game makes it through Kickstarter we'll finally have something to scratch that old-school JRPG itch we've had since *Child Of Light*.

Dom Peppiatt

EDGE OF ETERNITY is charging its ATB bar at Midgar Studios. It's just relaunched on Kickstarter: kickstarter.com/projects/midgarstudio/edge-of-eternity

"A GAME THAT WOULDN'T EXIST WITHOUT FINAL FANTASY VII'S INFLUENCE, YET IT'S DIFFERENT WHERE IT COUNTS"

FAILURE TO KICKSTART

Edge Of Eternity has already come and gone on Kickstarter, unfortunately failing to get funded on the first attempt. There are some key differences this time, though – Midgar Studio clearly learnt from its errors...



UI

The user interface is much cleaner and more in line with what you'd expect from a traditional JRPG now. It looks a little familiar, but that isn't really a bad thing.

BATTLE SYSTEM

The game's battle system seems to have evolved from a *FFVIII*-esque ATB affair and into a *Grandia*-inspired scrolling bar, perhaps due to *Child Of Light*'s success?

GRAPHICS

The graphics have seen a noticeable upgrade – built in Unity, the game also plans a mobile release, but hopefully not at the expense of good console graphics.

ETA Q2 2015

DEV DODGE ROLL

PUB DEVOLVER DIGITAL

TWITTER @DODGEROLLGAMES

Enter The Gungeon

Prepare for gunishment



IT FEELS APPROPRIATE to begin talking about a game called *Enter The Gungeon* by telling you about the guns, which, to put it mildly, are a little bizarre. Yes, there are pistols, shotguns and so on, but you can also get guns that fire rainbows, lasers, cannonballs, fish, foam darts, envelopes, and bees, to name but a few. Of course, the idea of having sure a huge variety of guns is that there'll be different tactics associated with using each one, adding variety to the game. We'd imagine the same will apply to the various characters that you're able to choose from when starting the game. If you find a pleasure in experimenting with gameplay, then, *Enter The Gungeon* will certainly scratch that itch.

That variety extends to the dungeon – or 'gungeon', in the game's parlance – itself. Every time you, er, enter the gungeon, a brand new stage

will be built for you to conquer. In that respect, then, the game is a rogue-like and comes with many of the tricks you'd expect from that genre. That means collecting loot as you explore each of its rooms, buying new items when you come across a shopkeeper, and experimenting with what those upgrades do and how they can aid your run.

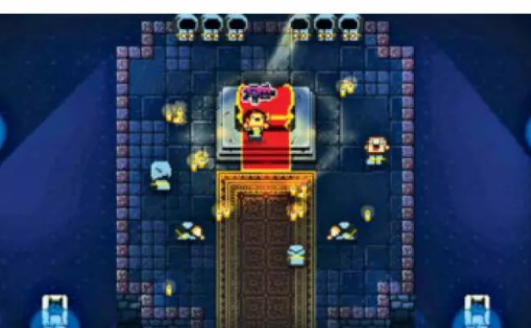
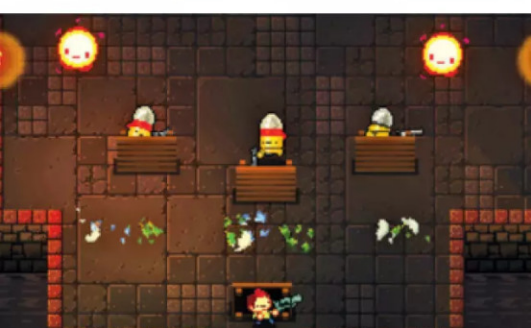
When it comes to how it plays, though, the title is very much an action game. Its fast-paced twin-stick shooting seems to require you to master the timing of a move which shares its name with the studio is making the game – the dodge roll. *Enter The Gungeon*'s dodge roll gives you a brief window of invincibility, making it incredibly important when trying to navigate your way through the gungeon's traps and the enemies' attacks. It's not your only tool, though. There is also a brilliant cover mechanic – in classic action movie

style, you are able to flip tables to provide yourself with a barrier to protect you from gunfire.

Speaking of gunfire, there'll be plenty of that. As well as being a rogue-like and a twin-stick action game, *Enter The Gungeon* has also got a bit of the bullet hell shooter in it. That chaotic mix of weaving your way through complex bullet patterns, flipping tables and dodging traps, all while firing off a barrage of rockets, bees and machine gun fire sounds like a recipe for an intense, exciting and challenging game. In other words, we just hope *Enter The Gungeon* is as great as it sounds, because if it is, we anticipate having a lot of fun.

Indeed, 'fun' is certainly what the game is aiming for, in more ways the one. The whole set-up for the game is deliberately ridiculous – you are trying to get hold of a legendary weapon that it is so powerful, it can kill the past. We're not against

"YOU CAN GET GUNS THAT FIRE RAINBOWS, LASERS, CANNONBALLS, FISH, FOAM DARTS, ENVELOPES, AND BEES"



△OX□ This game lets you flip tables. There's a table there... why haven't you flipped it yet?!

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- △ The 'gundeads' that populate the game include huge, powerful bosses.
- The game has a weapon that lets you shoot rainbows. What more do you want?
- × Developer Dodge Roll says there'll be plenty of secrets for you to discover.
- Its randomly generated nature means it's different every time you play.

THE DNA OF ENTER THE GUNGEON



SPELUNKY

In generating a new level for you to tackle every time you play, and giving you the option of earning cash to buy items from shopkeepers, *Enter The Gungeon* shares many similarities with other rogue-likes such as *Spelunky*.

SINE MORA

At times, *Enter The Gungeon* begins to resemble bullet hell shooters like *Sine Mora* as gunfire fills the screen.

BORDERLANDS

The huge array of ridiculous weapons you're given to play with in *Enter The Gungeon* is reminiscent of Gearbox's *Borderlands* series.

HOTLINE MIAMI

Take away its melee combat and *Hotline Miami* is a fast-paced twin-stick shooter, which is what we expect *Enter The Gungeon* to be.

levity, but games that aim to be humorous can end up coming off like that 'wacky' person we all know – you know, that one that thinks their 'off the wall' nature makes them hilarious, when in reality, they are infuriatingly witless dullards. We've not seen enough of *Enter The Gungeon* to determine whether it's going to stray into that territory yet, so we're just going to have to keep our fingers crossed. The inclusion of a 'Master Of Unlocking' hat that looks like Jill Valentine's is at least subtle enough to give us hope that the game's humour will enrich it, rather than becoming grating.

Enter The Gungeon is a combination of a disparate ideas and game types – the rogue-like, the bullet hell shooter and the twin-stick action game – but it's a combination that sounds like it can work. If its colourful, chunky pixel art and the wonderfully expressive animation of its characters is indicative of the quality of the game that Dodge Roll is constructing, then work it certainly will.

Paul Walker-Emig

ENTER THE GUNGEON is being gunveloped by Dodge Roll Games. Check the gunsite for more guntails: dodgeroll.com/gungeon

△OX□ There might be a hell of a lot of guns to choose from in this game, but we've always got time for a trusty ol' laser.

TIME LORD

A parody of generic action movies and hokey time travel fiction, *Super Time Force*'s story and characters are suitably ridiculous. Don't worry about whether all that time travel stuff makes sense, though, because it's a great excuse to send you to various periods throughout history. You will be able to, for example, visit the prehistoric era to battle vicious dinosaurs, travel to a post-apocalyptic *Mad Max*-like time period, and warp to the medieval era.

GET A REWIND?

The primary mechanic behind *Super Time Force* is difficult to describe (though easy to comprehend once you have a controller in your hand). While shooting your way towards the end of a level, you can rewind time and start as a new character. Your previous run will still play out, however, allowing you to have a bunch of characters on screen attacking enemies at once. Indeed, constantly rewinding time and using multiple characters becomes necessary as the game gets harder.

JEFF LEPPARD

Every time you rewind time in *Super Time Force*, you'll be given the opportunity to switch to a new character. Naturally, each of them has their own attacks and special abilities that makes them useful in particular situations. Jef Leppard, for example, can fire a bouncing grenade that you can use to take out an enemy hiding in a nook below you, while the benefits of Airy McKillen's ability to spray ricocheting bullets and fire a charged shot through walls are pretty obvious.

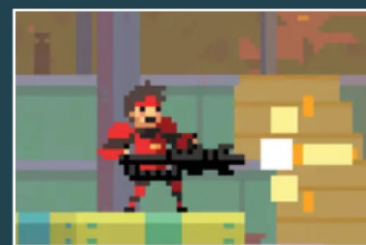
SHU! SHU! SHU!

The greatest thing about the PS4 version of *Super Time Force* is that it lets you play as our favourite, lovable, Antonio Banderas meme impersonating executive, Shuhei Yoshida. Shu uses his smartphone as a weapon, firing out deadly emoticons to take down enemies. His charge attack sends out powerful tweets reading "#STFU" or "I Love PS4!". Surely this has to be the first time that the executive of a console company has been included as a playable character? Hopefully, it's not the last, because we'd be up for more Shu.

SCORE ATTACK

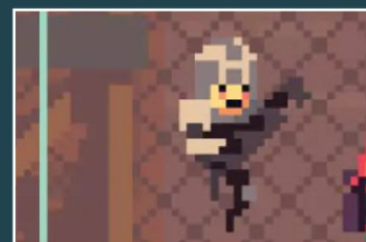
Once you start to get your head around how *Super Time Force* works, the compulsion to not only finish levels, but finish them with style, starts to creep in. That means you will want to complete levels as quickly as possible in order to boost your standings on the leaderboard, as well as collect all the Shards and Glorbs hidden throughout each one of *Super Time Force*'s levels.

ROLL CALL



JEAN RAMBOIS

One of the game's starting characters, Rambois (no prizes for working out which famous action hero his name's riffing on) fires single bullets as his standard attack. His charge attacks unleashes a three-pronged barrage of bullets that is very useful for clearing out clusters of weaker enemies.



SHIELDY BLOCKERSON

A defensive character, Shieldy raises his shield to block and reflect bullets. Charging and releasing the attack will create a circular energy shield that can damage enemies. You can also point the shield downwards and jump on their heads like a little ironclad Mario.



ZACKASAURUS

You can find Zackasaurus on the first stage of 1,000,000 BC. His standard attack is a bite. His charge attack fires poison that sticks to surfaces. Which is particularly useful against enemies that remain stationary...



LOU DON JIM

Lou Don Jim wields a light sword which can be used to destroy bullets and projectiles (and to hit whatever's shooting at you, obviously). His charge attack sees him lob his sword in a boomerang-like fashion.

Instant Expert

ETA Q2 2015 | DEV CAPYBARA | PUB SONY

Super Time Force Ultra



www.XB1.co.uk

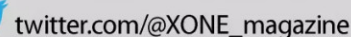


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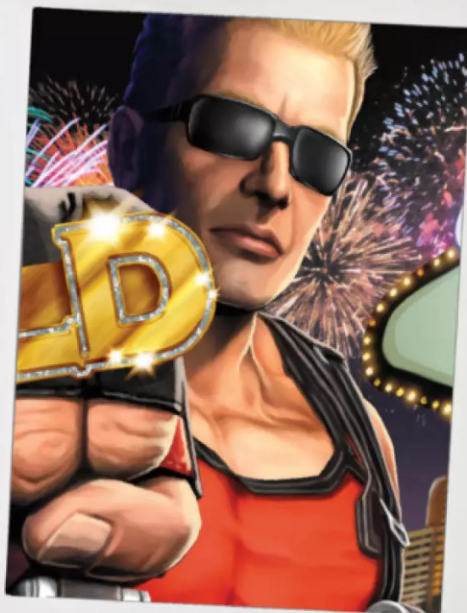
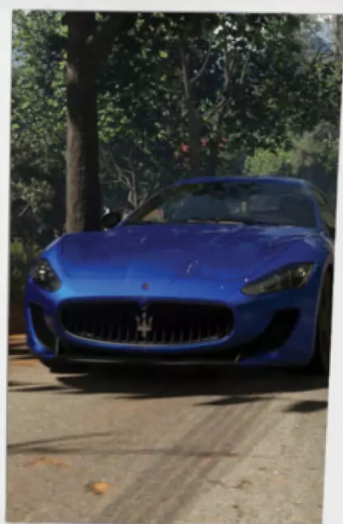
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DEVELOPMENT HELL

Paul Walker-Emig investigates the case for game delays and what they mean for us players at the other end...



At the start of this new generation of consoles, we've seen a whole spate of game delays, from *Watch Dogs* and *Driveclub*, through to *Battlefield 4* and *The Witcher 3*. For that reason, now seems like the perfect time to ask what it is that causes games to get delayed and sometimes even fall into that dreaded limbo state commonly known as development hell. We also consider whether ending up having to extend development time for one reason or another is necessarily a blessing or a curse. As you'll see, it's by no means a foregone conclusion that game delays will necessarily lead to what comes out the other side being of high quality – delayed games can often be irreparably damaged.



CASE STUDY #1

DUKE NUKEM FOREVER'S TERRIBLE MISMANAGEMENT

THE STORY

When you think of 'development hell', you can't help but think about the infamous development of *Duke Nukem Forever*. The game spent an incredible 15 years in development and its hard not to attribute that to poor decision making by those at the helm. Over the years, multiple developers who worked on the game have come out to criticise the game's director, George Broussard, in particular, claiming that his never-ending tinkering and lack of vision for what *Duke Nukem Forever* would ultimately be was the primary reason for the game's lengthy delay. Broussard was reportedly never satisfied with *Duke Nukem* and was constantly adding new features to the game, with the result being that it was never finished. As those constant tweaks were made and development stretched into years, the game started to look antiquated, meaning that developer 3D Realms would have to rework everything they'd done to keep the game looking cutting-edge, hence the game's switch from the *Quake 2* engine over to Unreal in 1998. That extended development cycle would lead to conflict with the publisher, Take-Two, and financial issues, with the *Duke Nukem Forever* team eventually being laid off and the game's development coming to a halt. Gearbox would soon revive the project and, with a quick turnaround, got the game shipped in 2011 after a 15 year wait.

THE RESULT

With 15 years of anticipation behind it, *Duke Nukem Forever* was always going to struggle to live up to the hype. Upon its release, the game was critically panned – it earned itself a score of 33% in issue 207 of this very magazine, for example. The game's long development cycle – seemingly a result of its director's constant attempts to re-imagine it in order to remain relevant – ultimately resulted in a game that lost what made *Duke Nukem 3D* appealing along the way and failed to replace those elements with anything to make the game engaging to a modern audience. Whether judged against the standards of an old school shooter or its contemporaries, *Duke Nukem Forever* was a colossal failure.

THE LESSON

With big projects, a clear idea of where you're going and the commitment to stick to that vision is crucial. Also, spending 15 years on a game is probably a bad idea.



CASE STUDY #2

DRIVECLUB AND THE NEW GENERATION

THE STORY

If there's one thing that can throw a spanner in the works of a game's development, it's getting to grips with the technology offered by a new generation of consoles. That's evidenced by the large number of delays we saw in 2014, as well as multiple examples of sub-par titles released during the launch windows of every generation. There's a new dimension that's come into play this time around, though, and that's the shift games are making towards 'always-online' experiences. *Driveclub* is a perfect example of the problems that can cause. Originally slated to release alongside the PS4, *Driveclub* was delayed until early 2014, before suffering a further delay to October. Though Sony never provided a great deal of detail on the delay, the comments it did make seemed to suggest that it was the social and multiplayer aspects around which the game had been marketed that were causing the problems. That proved to be the case, with the game's launch turning out to be a disaster. Players were unable to get online to play the game they'd bought and many of the key features Sony had been touting had to be disabled as servers struggled to cope. The need to get *Driveclub*'s servers sorted also resulted in the already announced PS Plus version of *Driveclub* having to be pulled and indefinitely delayed.

THE RESULT

While *Driveclub* was far from being a *Duke Nukem Forever* style disaster, the problems it had at launch were certainly a blow; it's hard to imagine

"PLAYERS WERE UNABLE TO GET ONLINE TO PLAY THE GAME THEY HAD BOUGHT"

THE LESSON

First impressions count, so it's worth delaying a game if it means you can ensure it works properly. Test your servers to ensure your game works like *Call Of Duty* when it comes out, not like *Driveclub*.



IN JEOPARDY

We nervously wait to see in what state these troubled games emerge from development hell



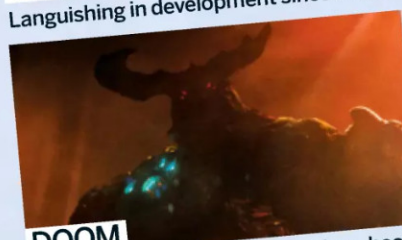
THE LAST GUARDIAN

Languishing in development since 2008



HOMEFRONT: THE REVOLUTION

Passed from THQ, to Crytek to Deep Silver



DOOM

So troubled that they rebooted the reboot



THE DIVISION

What happened to the 2014 release date?

CASE STUDY #3

FINAL FANTASY XV AND FULFILLING THE VISION

THE STORY

Originally announced as *Final Fantasy Versus XIII*, a *Final Fantasy XIII* spin-off, the game was intended to bring a new dimension to the series. It would seem, however, that the desire to do something new and, more importantly, to do it right, can lead to problems. There have been various explanations given for the game's delay, but the one that strikes true is that it has taken a long time to get the game's more action focused combat systems right. As development stretched into years and *Versus XIII* became *Final Fantasy XV*, Square Enix found itself confronting a situation worryingly similar to that faced by *Duke Nukem Forever*'s developers: how to respond to changes in the technological landscape since it started work on the game in 2006. The question that was asked was whether or not the team could realise its vision for *Final Fantasy XV* if it was released on the PS3 generation. The answer that was reached was 'no', and development was moved to be current gen only. Despite the similarity between *Duke Nukem Forever* and *Final Fantasy XV* in that regard, there is a crucial difference. Where the former's decision to move to new technologies seemed to be forced by a lack of vision, the latter seems to have made changes based on a clear idea of what the game should be. That has resulted in a lengthy development, and Square Enix looks close to seeing the game's development through.



THE RESULT

When a game is delayed in order to ensure that it meets the vision and standards of its creators, it's hard to see it as anything other than a good thing. Whether delaying that latest entry in the *Final Fantasy* series will ultimately result in the game meeting the standards that Square Enix has set for itself remains to be seen, but the excitement now surrounding the game and the state it looks to be in means things are looking pretty positive right now. In any case, the raft of games that were released without a delay, despite the fact that they clearly weren't up to scratch, shows the delaying a game to make sure it's up to standard is largely a good thing (we're looking at you, *Battlefield 4*).

THE LESSON

Releasing a game that doesn't live up to a developer's own expectations is rarely going to result in a warm reception from its audience. If delaying a game allows a developer to achieve the target it has set itself, we're all for it.

Was it worth it?*

X-Men: Destiny

35%

L.A. Noire

91%

South Park: The Stick of Truth

81%

Aliens: Colonial Marines

45%

*PLAY Review Scores

HOT TOPIC HD REMAKES

LUKE ALBIGÉS
DEPUTY EDITOR, PLAY

“REMAKES AREN'T
REPLACING NEW GAMES”

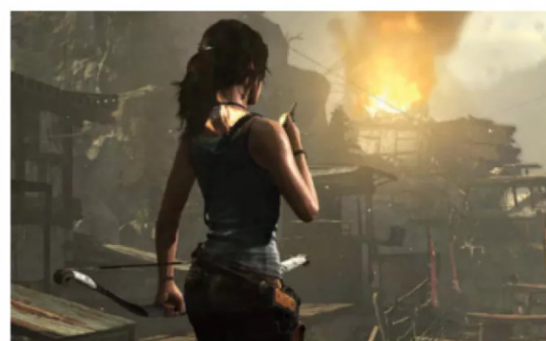


IT'S ALL ABOUT choice, people. You have to realise that not every PS4 owner was necessarily part of the last generation at all, in which case they would have missed out on some all-time classics. Definitive PS4 versions and remasters allow these fortunate souls to play improved versions of amazing games like *GTA V* and *The Last Of Us* without having to buy another console – I don't see how anyone can argue that's a bad thing without coming across as somewhat selfish and entitled.

When it's literally just a visual upgrade (as with *Tomb Raider*) then sure, these re-releases offer little for returning players to get excited about. But more often than not, developers are going the extra mile to add features and content to the ultimate versions of their games. *GTA*'s first-person option and vastly improved online suite make it feel new, while *Borderlands 2*'s four-way split-screen option is something I (and many others) have wanted to see for years – maybe the *DmC* haters will even be able to enjoy the great game now they can play as classic Dante and apply various difficulty tweaks that nudge it closer to the rest of the series. Why would I not want to play the absolute best version of a game I love?



Pricing is something of a thorny issue but so far, I've not seen all that many developers really take the piss. Asking full price (or close) for straight ports like *Sleeping Dogs* and *Tomb Raider* is a little rich, sure, but just watch the prices tumble when they don't match new releases in terms of sales – both those games are available for under £20 already and if you didn't play them at launch, you presumably aren't in too much of a rush to do so. Give it a few weeks and that RRP you scoffed at will inevitably be slashed. And in the case of more recent games or those with vast improvements, the simple truth is that they're *worth* full price, with the added bonus that you can usually still get a decent amount for the original PS3 versions if you're looking to upgrade.

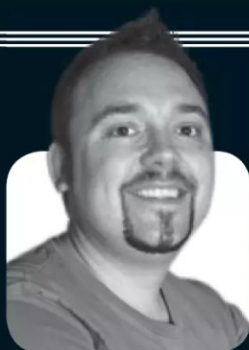


Whether you like them or not, HD remasters are a necessary evil in a world where development costs are so high that they're driving even some of the biggest studios to (or even over) the brink of closure. Remakes aren't replacing new releases – they're funding them. It's like a more reliable Kickstarter with immediate results. If buying *Borderlands 2* – one of my favourite games of last generation – again means 2K has more money to put towards making *Borderlands 3* a thing, I'd be an idiot not to support it both financially and in proving there's still a market for cel-shaded bloodbaths. If you don't like it, just vote with your wallet.

That's the point here, really – coming back to my opening comment, it's all about choice. Do your homework, read up on what's new in any given 'definitive' version of a game and if you don't feel like you should pay for the privilege of playing a better version of the same great game, then don't. It really is that easy. Just remember that if you're upset or offended by a re-release that's too soon, too expensive or too lazy, you're probably not part of the target audience anyway. You're probably too easily angered by trivial first world problems, too. Just saying.



ΔΟΧΔ When remasters are as good as *GTA V*, you'd have to be a crazy fool *not* to double dip...



DARRAN JONES

EDITOR, RETRO GAMER

“WE’RE CONSTANTLY
TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF”

WHO DO YOU AGREE WITH?

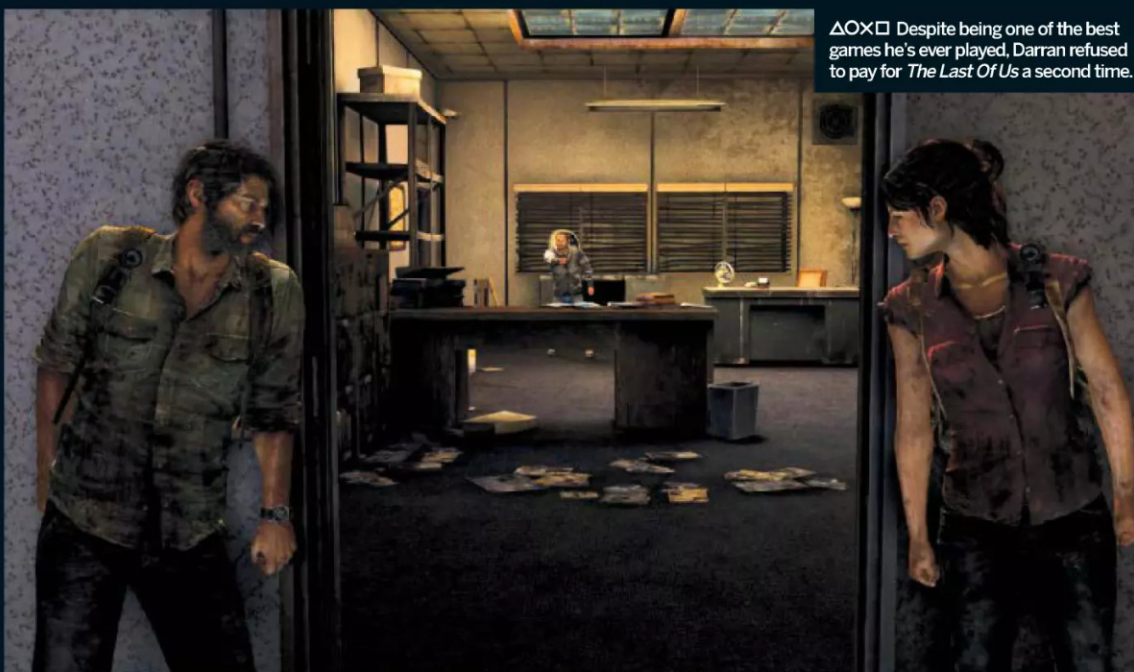
Let us know via social media



AS SOON AS Square Enix announced *Tomb Raider: Definitive Edition*, I knew that we, the consumers, would be subjected to endless and often needless HD updates. After all, why should publishers care about consumers? Consumers are stupid enough to pay for DLC that once not so long ago would have been unlocked in-game. Consumers will still happily buy incoming releases like *Battlefield Hardline*, despite *Battlefield 4* being a broken mess at launch. Why wouldn’t publishers want to take the easy route?

Yes, I’m aware that publishers are businesses and need to make money, but I’m also aware that publishers like to milk the teats of its cash cows until they’re bloodied and sore – whether it’s the countless iterations of *Street Fighter IV* (a topic for another day) or this constant stream of updated HD ports that are often still inferior to the original PC version.

Oh, and while we’re on the subject of these ‘HD’ jibjobs, let’s not forget, people, that the original games were also HD. Yes, the resolutions were only 720p as opposed to 1080p but the average consumer won’t see the difference anyway. “Oh, but you love the ports of *Ico* and *Shadow Of The Colossus*,” I



ΔOX□ Despite being one of the best games he’s ever played, Darran refused to pay for *The Last Of Us* a second time.

hear you say. Yes, but, dear readers, those were standard-definition ports that received notable upgrades that vastly improved them. They took a significant and arguably needed jump. The jump represented in most so-called improved ‘HD’ editions is minimal, especially as they’re typically being downsized in the first place as PS3 aren’t as powerful as the PCs the games were first coded on.

It’s also important to remember that a fair amount of time has passed between the original SD versions and their high-def counterparts. You don’t mind paying additional cash when you last played the game six years previously. Nowadays most companies don’t even wait a year before they spring an ‘enhanced’ edition upon us. *GTA V*, *The Last Of Us* and *Metro: Last Light* were barely out for a year before they received upgrades. “But you don’t have to buy it,” comes the expected counterargument, and you’re right, we don’t. But hell! Let’s have a little transparency here, people. Do you really think Gearbox didn’t have a PS4 version of *Borderlands: The Pre-Sequel* planned when it was announced? But hey, what does it matter? Load it with a crappy remote control Claptrap and idiots will buy it, even



though it doesn’t include the original game, because why would it?

I appreciate that these ‘updates’ allow publishers to put money toward new games. I get that, but what I don’t get is that many of these games are thrown out at full price. Most of the enhanced games so far are huge commercial hits that you’d like to think made enough money when they sold in their millions originally. Give us a discount if we can prove we own the original and I’d be more than happy, because I’m pretty sure publishers aren’t spending the same money they did the first time around, so why should I? Although, why would they? We’ve proven that we’ll happily put up with this shit, and as long as we do that we’re constantly going to be taken advantage of.

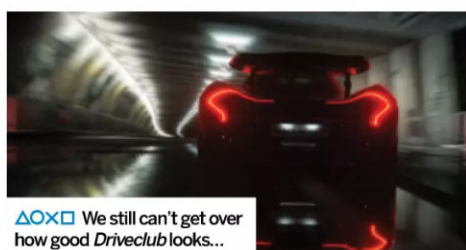


PICTURE PERFECT

Photo Mode is one of the coolest new features in gaming, and many now enjoy the hunt for the perfect shot as much as they do the games themselves. Adam Barnes speaks to some of the best virtual photographers on the scene...



ΔOX□ It's only in stills that you can really appreciate the detail in a lot of games.



ΔOX□ We still can't get over how good *Driveclub* looks...



HOW DO YOU enjoy your games? It might seem like such a simple question, but the beauty of gaming is in its myriad options of not only *what* to play, but *how*. Do you enjoy playing on the hardest difficulty, perhaps? Or how about hunting down every collectible like a compulsive digital hoarder? Maybe it's the 'ping' of a Trophy unlocking and the hunt for those ever-impressive Platins that keep you coming back for more? Well, thanks to the PS4 and that all-important Share button, a subset of gamers are finding a totally new way of expressing themselves in-game: with photography. You've likely already heard of Photo Mode, and if you've played *The Last Of Us*, *Shadow Of Mordor* or *Driveclub*, then the chances are you've played around with it, too. But to some gamers Photo Mode takes up a chunk of their time, often more than the actual game itself. It opens up creative ways of experiencing games, and many even claim it helps to appreciate the detail that goes into these digital worlds.

"I love taking photos in general," says Brodie Homeniuk of why he enjoys *Driveclub*'s Photo Mode. "Most people – myself included – aren't able to just go and take photos of high-end cars whenever they want. This simulates that

extremely well. Being able to see the attention to detail that the developers packed into this game up close is another big one for me." Let's not forget the excitable reveal of *Driveclub* and its almost pornographic description of custom-built leather interiors and microscopic metallic flecks of paint; a game that finely detailed deserves to be captured with a camera, surely. "Ever since *Driveclub*'s Photo Mode came out, I've probably spent as much time in Photo Mode as I have playing the game. Being able to see all these cars from any angle in photorealistic detail is pretty stunning."

Yet what Patrick Woods enjoys about Photo Mode is a little more personal than that – he wants to display a mood. "What I mainly enjoy about Photo Mode is trying to create images that provoke emotion," he says. "It's not easy and I've definitely not fully grasped the concept, but this honestly makes for great practice in terms of real life photography." In this regard, it probably isn't a surprise to hear that Woods is particularly fond of *The Last Of Us* and the expressive, nuanced emotions Naughty Dog's animators have packed into Joel and Ellie. "Let's put it this way: about thirty percent of my time while playing *The Last Of Us* was spent in Photo

Mode. It's just so much fun to have that option to take a picture at any moment and capture something you would have missed otherwise."

And that's an important sentiment, really. While we're all busy popping skulls with perfectly timed headshots, swearing far too much as we oversteer around corners, or reveling in our victory over the latest Uruk Warchief, we might be overlooking all the subtleties that developers are putting into their games. Pause a *Shadow Of Mordor* fight at the right time and you'll see that the pack of orcs you're trying to decapitate aren't just vague cannon fodder, but individual enemies with their own grimaces, snarls and yelps. Pain might be the easiest expression to capture in *Shadow Of Mordor*'s Photo Mode, but take a closer look and you'll see every warrior reacting to the ranger's fighting prowess in totally different ways. "I enjoy using Photo Mode because not only does it allow me to take great pictures," says Germain Asaba. "It also gives me the opportunity to appreciate the effort some developers put into their games. There are certain details in games that gamers miss just by

"I CAN DO MORE IN PHOTO MODE THAN I CAN WITH REAL PHOTOGRAPHY MOST OF THE TIME"

playing through the game but with Photo Mode you get to see some painstaking attention to detail developers put into their games and take pictures as well."

But is Photo Mode anywhere near as capable or as enjoyable as the real thing? Woods, who is a cinematography student, claims that it is, and in some ways is even *better* than real-world photography. "Honestly, I can do more in Photo Mode than I can with real photography most of the time. Stuff like depth of field is all dependent on the lens to create a shallower or thinner depth of field. And with so many options it's like having any and every type of lens you'd ever need. There's also angles you couldn't reach by hand that you can do with Photo Mode." And that's saying nothing of the ability to manipulate your photo's subjects into any subtle action, reaction or position that you could need – a lot more comfortably and with less resistance than you might in real

ΔOX□ Why restrict yourself to standard 16:9 resolution? Go nuts!



FEATURE | PICTURE PERFECT



△×□ Tweaking settings can help create images that look like more than just screenshots.



△×□ Always be prepared, else you could end up missing the perfect shot...



life. Then there's the many explosions and action shots that videogames enable, a fact that would be exceptionally difficult (and not to mention expensive) if you were to attempt the same thing in real life. Woods adds that Photo Mode has "definitely helped my studies", and has

spoke to said they thought the feature should be included in all future games, and publishers would be missing out on a trick if they didn't at least consider it. With social media more important than ever, sharing a photo you've painstakingly composed is, ultimately, free advertising

"I'VE PROBABLY SPENT AS MUCH TIME IN PHOTO MODE AS I HAVE PLAYING THE GAME"

even improved his understanding of symmetry formations in photography.

But as of right now, the inclusion of Photo Mode exists in only a handful of games, and we don't know how many more might include it. Everyone we

for that game – something that *Driveclub* developer Evolution Studio understands. It's regularly sharing some of the best photos it finds through Twitter and Facebook, which helps build a community of dedicated virtual photographers.

"I've had four or five photos featured on *Driveclub*'s Facebook page," says Homeniuk. "It's a good feeling." Sony needs to do more to foster this creativity, though, especially if it wants to really prove the value of that Share button. "Featuring community photos on the PS4 home screen or on their official blog, could incentivise people to check out Photo Mode a bit more," adds Homeniuk, and it's certainly an idea Sony might want to consider. Asaba agrees, saying that Sony should "go through the various forums and pick some of their favorite pictures then show them in videos on their channel". He adds that there should be more Photo Mode competitions, too, something that Sucker Punch and Naughty Dog both did with

HOW TO GET THE PERFECT SHOT



COMPOSITION

Perhaps the most awkward to explain, composition is the arrangement of an image and the framing and position of all its constituent parts. It's important to make sure the subject – in this case likely a car or character – is a prominent feature, while eliminating unwanted extras. Clever camera positioning will be the focus for getting the correct composition – remember that having extras (such as another character's limb) poking out of the edges is best to avoid.



DEPTH OF FIELD

This feature is handled in different ways with different Photo Modes. In most cases, Photo Mode refers to depth of field as just that, and is a fairly simple mechanic of blurring out foreground or background details. In *Driveclub*, however, it's termed aperture (the correct term for the camera's mechanic) and lets you be a little more precise about what the lens' focus is. A higher f-stop creates a wider focused image, a lower f-stop directs the focus to what the camera is pointing at.

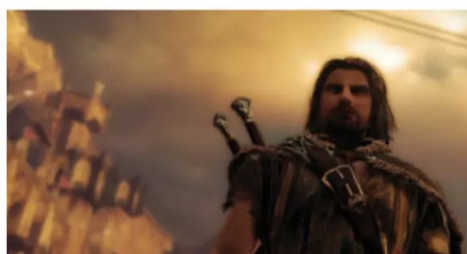


SHUTTER SPEED

Driveclub's Photo Mode features the ability to alter the shutter speed of your imaginary camera, which is actually a core part of taking action photos. Since you will likely spend most of your time in *Driveclub* blasting around tracks at high speed, tweaking the shutter speed in the Photo Mode will allow you to highlight the central subject of the image, then enable you to blur the environment and everything around it, thus giving the image a sensation of speed and movement.



△○×□ Expect even more games to add Photo Modes.



△○×□ *Second Son*: still one of PS4's most beautiful games.



△○×□ Games with good lighting always lend themselves well to nice snaps.

in*Famous: Second Son* and *The Last Of Us Remastered*. "Competition always produces some amazing photos," he says, "and gets the community engaged."

Woods even goes one step further, adding that Sony needs to create a social media service purely for shared Photo Mode images – perhaps a PS4 app? "What I think we need is our own social networking for this kind of stuff. Instagram, but with PlayStation shares. Videos – up to let's say 20 seconds, why not?" That would certainly get a community of gamers together, especially

if it allowed you to follow your favourite photographers and add comments. It would help build interest in this creative endeavour, in much the same way PlayStation has done for livestreaming.

It is still early days for Photo Mode, but hopefully Sony will ensure it remains an important feature for PS4 games. "Racing games are probably the most important genre for Photo Mode in my opinion," Brodie tells us. "But I see no reason not to include it in pretty much any game as long as it's not too much effort. I've seen plenty of great photos

from *The Last Of Us*, *Shadow Of Mordor*, and *infamous: Second Son*." That doesn't mean it's perfect, of course, since the tools we've had access to are fairly limited. "The PS4's Share button is convenient, but unfortunately introduces noticeable compression in the images it saves. Reducing or eliminating that compression would definitely improve Photo Mode in my opinion." Meanwhile, both Woods and Asaba agree that the camera in the Photo Modes available so far are restricting, and that developers should be relaxed about how far the virtual camera can be from the subject, even if it means inadvertently accessing impossible areas. "Photo Mode is really good right now but it's still limited in how far you can pan the camera," claims Asaba. "For instance, in *Driveclub* you can't pan the camera far away from the car, so I'd like to see the freedom to move the camera a little bit further away from the main object than how it is right now." Considering how unexpected this feature has been, Photo Mode is still fairly young – as graphics improve throughout the generation, we'll no doubt see more developers wanting gamers to share those outstanding visuals. Yet whether Photo Mode is here to stay will depend on this community of PS4 sharers – so get creative and let Sony know how important this cool new feature is to you.



FILTER

In this Instagram-fuelled age, it wouldn't be modern photography without applying some kind of arbitrary effect or filter to your work. Each game comes with a particular set of filters unique to it, so have a scroll through to see what options are available to you. In most cases, you will simply adjust the colour of the overall shot, which can dramatically affect the tone of the photo. Remember, don't go overboard: you don't need to use every filter at 100 per cent strength.



EXPOSURE

In photography, using exposure values (or EVs) is a fairly complicated technique, affected not only by the length of time your shutter remains open, but also the camera's aperture and even the lighting of the scene you are photographing. In Photo Mode, it's a little simpler, however, and it generally affects the brightness of an image. It's still important since you can dramatically affect the mood or tone of your shot entirely just by altering how bright (or not) an image is.

SHARE YOUR BEST SHOTS

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PHOTOGRAPHER:

Brodie Homeniuk

HE SAYS: "The scratched paint, the chipped headlight, the reflection in the headlight. The detail in this game is astounding and this picture exemplifies that."

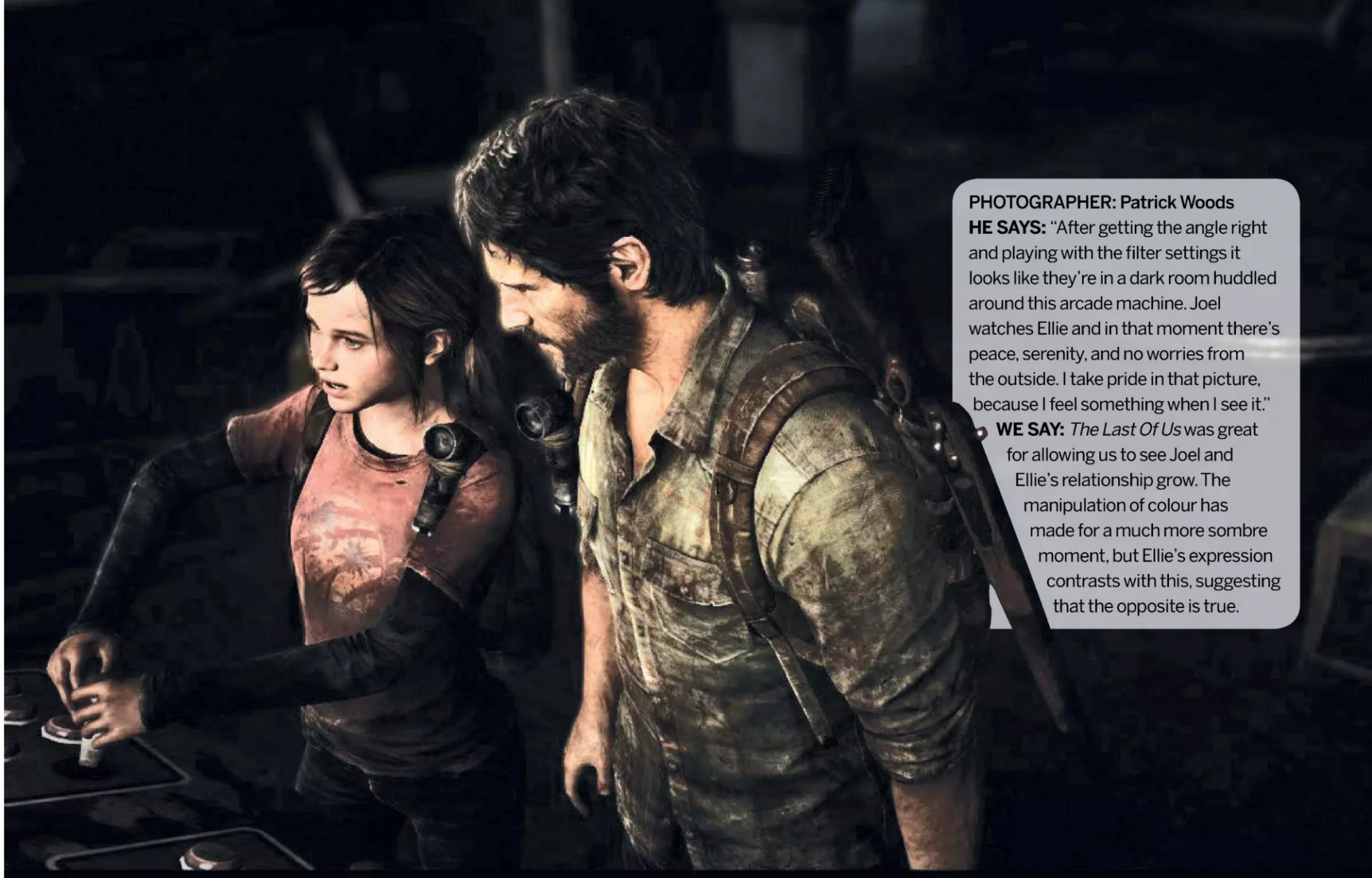
WE SAY: The heavy use of depth of field helps focus the image on the scratched front of the car, making for a good, eye-catching image. It's hard not to be impressed by the technical achievement of *Driveclub*. There are even realistic reflections in the headlight's glass! That's a crazy amount of detail.



PHOTOGRAPHER: Germain Asaba

HE SAYS: "I like that particular photo because it shows how beautiful *Driveclub*'s environments are. Racing games typically have visually appealing cars and less detailed environments. *Driveclub* is different in that it has detailed cars *and* detailed environment."

WE SAY: Smart depth of field has meant that the photo is framed nicely by the hanging branches of the blossom trees, while the floating petals in the foreground add an important bit of detail. The way the road sweeps from left to right, too, directs the eye around the image in its entirety.



PHOTOGRAPHER: Patrick Woods

HE SAYS: "After getting the angle right and playing with the filter settings it looks like they're in a dark room huddled around this arcade machine. Joel watches Ellie and in that moment there's peace, serenity, and no worries from the outside. I take pride in that picture, because I feel something when I see it."

WE SAY: *The Last Of Us* was great for allowing us to see Joel and Ellie's relationship grow. The manipulation of colour has made for a much more sombre moment, but Ellie's expression contrasts with this, suggesting that the opposite is true.



PHOTOGRAPHER: Kaz Zainal

HE SAYS: "This image showcased the attention of detail in *Driveclub* – the depth of field, particle effects, the rain droplets, global illumination and realistic lighting. Even the foliage reacts to the car's movement."

WE SAY: An obvious option here would have been to adjust the shutter speed to give the image a sense of momentum, but the way the grass is being kicked up by the wheels suggests that anyway.



TOP TEN GAME-CHANGING MOMENTS

EVERY SO OFTEN, YOU'LL COME ACROSS A MOMENT IN A GAME WHERE EVERYTHING CHANGES. THOSE MOMENTS CAN BE DISASTROUS, OR THEY CAN PROVIDE A NEW PERSPECTIVE THAT ELEVATES A GAME TO ANOTHER LEVEL, AS OUR LIST OF THE MOST STRIKING EXAMPLES SHOWS...



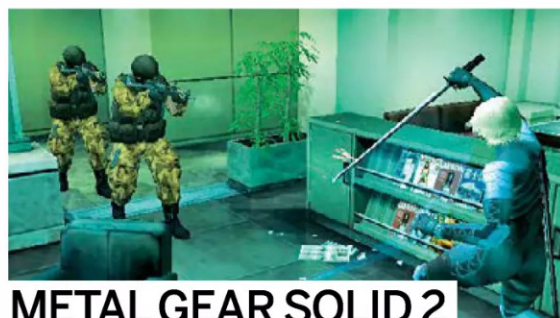
FINAL FANTASY VII

WE COULD'VE CHOSEN pretty much any *Final Fantasy* for this, but we're going for the entry that got many people into the series and, as such, will be the first time many experienced this moment. We are talking about gaining access to the Highwind airship. Before getting the Highwind, you spent hours walking around the game's overworld. Suddenly, you were liberated and able to go anywhere you wanted on your airship. Nice.



MIRROR'S EDGE

WHAT MADE MIRROR'S *Edge* interesting was that it was so different to other first-person games. Rather than fighting enemies, you had to avoid them, using your parkour skills to escape. That is, until you *did* get a gun, which changed up the way the game played. The introduction of guns in *Mirror's Edge* gets a spot on this list because of the significance of the change, not because it was a change for the better.



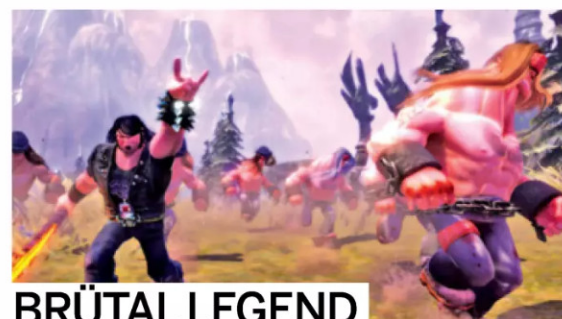
METAL GEAR SOLID 2

ADMITTEDLY, THE GAME changing moment we've picked out from *MGS2* doesn't really represent a change from a gameplay perspective, but it surprised players so much that we had to include it. We are talking about the moment in which Snake is replaced by Raiden as the main character. If we think of game-changing moments as hitting us with something we didn't expect, then *MGS2*'s famous curveball fits the bill.



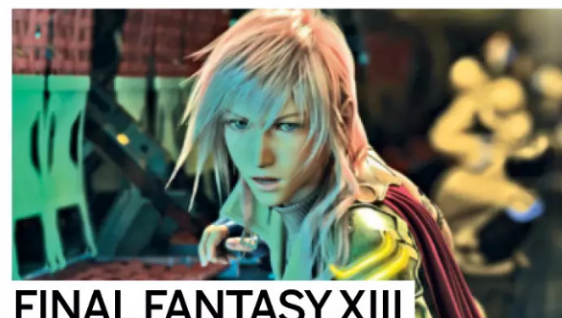
DESTINY

AS ANY OF you who have reached level 20 in *Destiny* will know, it's a moment where the game changes in a variety of ways. Where you'd previously been leveling up by gaining experience points, now you need to find and level up your rare gear in order to level up your character. As a result, your focus changes, too. You become an obsessive connoisseur of equipment, directing your activities with the aim of getting the best gear available.



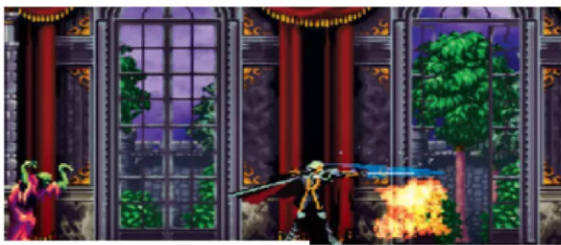
BRÜTAL LEGEND

THIS IS A title that, like *Mirror's Edge* before it, gets a spot on the list by virtue of the fact that its game-changing moment was so drastic, not because that change made the game better (it didn't). *Brütal Legend* starts off as a third-person hack and slash. Then, mid-way through the game, RTS sections are brought into the equation. That change was a jarring one for many of its players and, indeed, those RTS sections failed to impress.



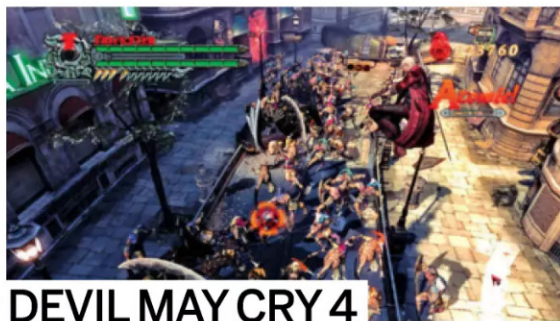
FINAL FANTASY XIII

CERTAIN THINGS ARE expected from a *Final Fantasy* game. It was no surprise, then, that *Final Fantasy XIII* was criticised for its incredibly linear nature. Players that managed to stick with it for about 12-15 hours, though, were rewarded with a game-changing moment. Once you reach the world of Gran Pulse, *Final Fantasy XIII* opens up and finally lets you free in the kind of world that *Final Fantasy* veterans expected in the first place.



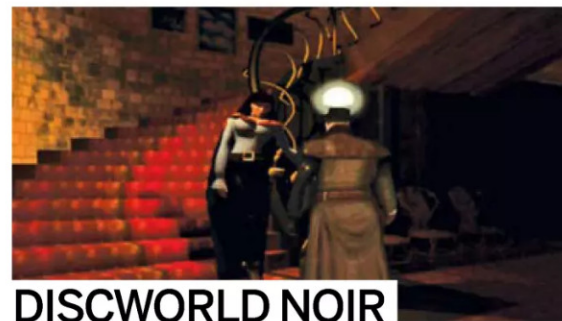
CASTLEVANIA SYMPHONY OF THE NIGHT

WE'VE MENTIONED ONE or two moments in this list where our expectations were turned upside down. Well, *Castlevania: Symphony Of The Night* does that quite literally. If you beat the bewitched Richter Belmont with the correct item equipped, you will be transported to an inverted version of the castle in which the game takes place. The sudden realisation that the game has been designed to work as well upside-down as it does in its normal perspective is mind-blowing. What you are essentially presented with is an entirely different version of the game, complete with its own enemies, area names and bosses.



DEVIL MAY CRY 4

IN THE FIRST half of *Devil May Cry 4*, you play as Nero, a brand new character with one melee and one ranged weapon. Then, just over half way into the game, you step into the shoes of series' stalwart, Dante, and suddenly find yourself with four fighting styles to switch between and multiple weapons to use. Not only does *Devil May Cry* give you a completely new character to play with, then, but new mechanics to suddenly get to grips with. The switch to Dante is also taken as an opportunity to suddenly make *Devil May Cry 4* bastard hard, which is yet another reason that the switch to Dante is a game-changing moment.



DISCWORD NOIR

A NOIR SATIRE set in the *Discworld* universe, *Discworld Noir* is a point-and-click adventure in which you play as a PI called Lewton who has become embroiled in a murder investigation. Gameplay revolves around hunting for clues and interviewing suspects in order to try and crack the case. That is, until the latter stages of the game, where you end up as a werewolf. From there, you have the ability to transform into your bestial form in order to pick up different scents that are visualised as different colours. Connecting scents to particular items and individuals adds a whole new dimension to your investigation.



HALF-LIFE 2

THE TOP GAME-CHANGER on our list is the introduction of the Gravity Gun in *Half-Life 2*. Allowing you to pick up items that litter the world around you – barrels, circular saw blades and whatever else you can find – and fire them towards your enemies, the Gravity Gun changes the way that you think about your environment and brought something completely new, not only to *Half-Life 2*, but to first-person shooters in general. You

gradually start to think of the Gravity Gun not so much as a weapon, but as a tool to manipulate your world and it is that fresh perspective that makes it such a significant introduction. A supercharged version of the Gravity Gun appears towards the end of the game to shake things up yet again, as you embark on an epic finale where you are able start lobbing your enemies around as well as firing beams of energy towards your foes.

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The Order: 1886

A blast from a very different past



DETAILS

PUBLISHER
Sony

DEVELOPER
Ready At Dawn

PRICE
£49.99

PLAYERS
1

RELEASE DATE
Out Now

AGE RATING
18

TWITTER
@RAD_Studios

Trophies 22



TIMES REALLY HAVE
changed. It used to be that the open world games and online multiplayer

battlegrounds were the outliers, rare beasts lost in a sea of solo adventures. Today, it's the other way around – purely single-player games are so wildly outnumbered by online-focused releases and sprawling open worlds that there's an odd novelty to them. Truth be told, not every game *needs* to have multiplayer modes or a gigantic open world – *Dead Space 2* and *LA Noire* respectively perfectly attest to this. So while a brief yet explosive cinematic adventure might not be what some modern gamers want, it's quite clearly the best way to showcase the true power of a new console just after its first birthday.


For all that times may have changed, this process is cyclic; those using *Gears Of War* as a dismissive comparison for


The Order likely don't know how right they are. Epic's cover shooter came along shortly into the Xbox 360's life and while linear in design, its visuals were able to shred those of every other game available as a result. Take it back another generation and *God Of War* fits the same brief, so it's somewhat poetic that the team behind *The Order* had a hand in shaping Kratos into the legend he is today. At this stage in a generation, people just want to see what the console they blew hundreds of pounds on can actually do. The honeymoon period is over – smiling along with slightly improved PS3 games is a 2014 chump's game. And in that respect, *The Order: 1886* does what it came to do, because frankly, you've never seen anything like it.

From a purely visual standpoint, *The Order* is peerless. With the possible exception of hair (this will go down in the history books as 'The Generation

That Couldn't Get Hair Right' – expect to see more hats over the next couple of years to try and disguise this) and the odd bit of facial weirdness, it's a technical showcase that likely won't be matched for some time. 2.35:1 cinema widescreen, used artistically rather than through necessity according to the studio, allows for post-processing and other effects that wouldn't be possible on a full-screen 1080p image at this level of fidelity. It's something that few will notice or bemoan in the long run either way – it took a little adjusting to at first but we'd forgotten that the game was even letterboxed at all until we finished it and noticed that the title screen had black borders above and below. It just looks like a movie, and that's sort of the point. It's almost the opposite of *LA Noire* – where the Rockstar game had stunning characters let down by lacklustre environments, here it's the world that

Blacksight

Press  to fire the pistol.

Flick  to select enemy targets.

"THE ORDER: 1886 DOES
WHAT IT CAME TO DO
BECAUSE FRANKLY,
YOU'VE NEVER SEEN
ANYTHING LIKE IT"

steals the show and its inhabitants that occasionally drop the ball. They look great and all, but infrequent odd animation transitions and some slightly iffy facial stuff can still shatter the illusion of realism.

It's a shame too, because this recreation of 19th Century London is frequently jaw-dropping. From the oppressive grimy Underground tunnels to the foggy streets of Whitechapel, architecture is top drawer throughout. Even those moments where you feel more penned in are rich in detail, plus it makes the illusion of scale when you get back to the city even more impressive. 'Illusion' is the key word there, as *The Order* is extremely linear in its design. The odd branch in the path may lead to an audio diary (because videogames) or a cache of ammo that inexplicably fits your ludicrous weapons (also because videogames) but generally speaking, it's *Final Fantasy XIII* all over again – it's a corridor, but it's a bloody gorgeous corridor and it's somewhat more acceptable for a shooter to follow this template. Most modern cover shooters and FPS games do, however hard they may try to disguise it, and not one of them looks this good.

Mechanically, *The Order* is solid, surprisingly so for a game that does this much. Gunplay is tight, aside from minor annoyances like the fact that not all cover can be snapped to. In fact, purely in terms of cover shooting, this is as good an example as we've seen in some time. While tucked safely behind an object, visibility is extremely limited (much more so than in similar games), meaning you need to peek out or fully lean out and aim in order to spot enemies. Trouble is, doing so invites bullets. Played on Hard (Normal is just too forgiving), the challenge is both reasonable and rewarding. Snipers showcase this best – once they spot you, they'll camp your location and make anything more than a momentary lean fatal. You need to bait them by briefly popping your head out of cover, forcing them to waste a shot and buying you just enough time to drop them with a well-placed counter shot of your own.

We knew from early hands-on sessions that shooting was good, but

it's the amount of deviation from hiding behind stuff and firing cool guns that impresses most. Several sections slow things down and demand stealthy play, a short melee-only one fairly early on setting up for a more complex one later where silent ranged weapons come into play. Instant failure on detection isn't ideal, but it's not exactly *Metal Gear* – patrol routes are simple and guards are, in the later sections at least, highlighted by directional lanterns that cleverly visualise their vision cones. There's also the odd foray into horror, with the hospital being particularly unsettling. Gruesome instruments line the chambers and beastly enemies lie in wait, giving the game a sense of tension not dissimilar to that of *Dead Space*. It even toys with basic platforming (don't worry, it works) and slows the pace with what we suppose could loosely be described as puzzles – don't expect to be taxed by either, although both are welcome in helping the game avoid being a long line of boxes to hide behind while shooting at things.

The weapons themselves are an odd bunch, ranging from the borderline useless (the machine pistol may as well fire feathers and tears) to the



"IT'S FINAL FANTASY XIII ALL OVER AGAIN – IT'S A CORRIDOR, BUT IT'S A BLOODY GORGEOUS CORRIDOR"

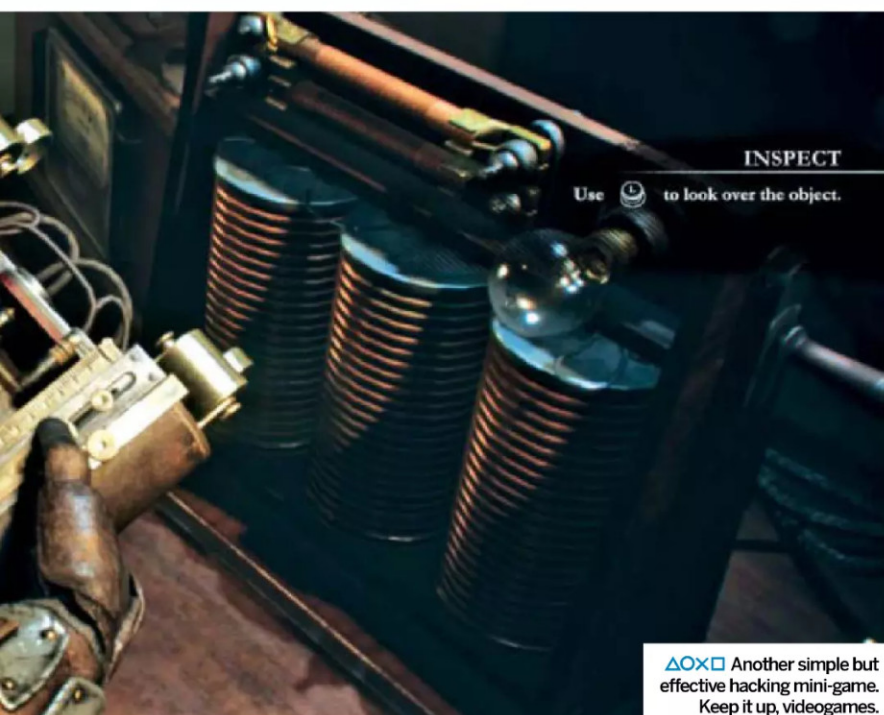


△××△ Why Galahad holds up Commander Shepard is never properly explained.





ΔOX□ You can extend the length of the game by just putting the controller down and sitting back to drink in how ridiculously good-looking it all is...



ΔOX□ Another simple but effective hacking mini-game. Keep it up, videogames.



ΔOX□ It's not just marvellous moustaches – there are some cracking beards on display, too.

ludicrously overpowered – the arc rifle locks onto any nearby enemies after a brief charge and obliterates all but the hardest in a bloody explosion, while the shoulder cannon makes up for the fact that it only gets one outing by having unlimited rounds with which to nuke a small army of rebels. The Coach Gun and various magnums are also capable of ruining lives with a single pull of the trigger, making it easy to fill your arsenal with powerful tools. Still, expect their limited ammo pools to mean you will have to slum it with an auto rifle or pistol from time to time during longer shooting sections.

While we're no fans of the developers' insistence on referring to its melee combat as 'cinemelee' (better or worse than 'levolution'?), the action itself is satisfying. A few sequences take the form of relatively simple QTEs, but there are a couple of close combat encounters where the playbook is opened up to offer a more involved system where you select how to move or attack when you can and defend when necessary. The cinematic payoff to each brutal blow landed or incoming strike turned away makes it easy to see where that insufferable buzzword came from and, again, it's quite unlike anything else out there – it's almost like an evolved version of a fight scene from a Quantic Dream game in a way, but it's far more satisfying than that sounds, due to that extra layer of involvement.

Ready At Dawn has managed to squeeze a surprising amount of variety into *The Order's* somewhat brief runtime (a Hard run taking in the sights will probably come in at around the seven-hour mark), so it's impressive to see no one section or gameplay style

let the side down. Production values are insanely high, and not just visually. Dialogue and voice work are both pretty darn good and presentation from intro to finale is flawless.

But as a somewhat brief linear cinematic experience with little more to do after the credits roll than scour for the few collectibles you missed and mop up a couple of Trophies for the Platinum, whether or not you'll feel satisfied that you're getting your money's worth with *The Order* very much depends on what you're looking for. If it's just a graphical showcase you're after, this stands mustachioed head and pauldroned shoulders above anything else available on any console. If you're the kind of person who likes to play through games multiple times regardless of a lack of reason to do so beyond simple enjoyment, you too will likely feel like you're getting a fair deal. But if you want more for your money than a ten-hour Platinum and an enjoyable-while-it-lasts explosive romp, you should probably just hold out for a price drop or the inevitable wave of pre-owned copies – *The Order* is definitely worth playing, but it's hard to accurately gauge its true value when so many games are offering so much more in terms of content.

Luke Albigés

VERDICT

Yes, it's pretty short. Yes, it's pretty linear. But the varied action is great, the visuals peerless and production values off the charts. In terms of a pure showcase for what PS4 can really do, look no further.

81%

Dying Light

A zombie game with some brains



DETAILS

PUBLISHER
Warner Bros.

DEVELOPER
Techland

PSN PRICE
£54.99

PLAYERS
1-5

INSTALL SIZE
16.7 GB

AGE RATING
18

TWITTER
@dyinglightgame

Trophies 51



THIS ISN'T DEAD

Island 2. We know, it seems a little redundant to tell you that when the title of the game is in big letters above these very words, but apparently it's necessary. *Dead Island* was fun, and it certainly has its place among the dumb zombie games of the world, but for all that *Dying Light* looks kind of similar and comes from Techland, you can't go into it thinking that it's just more of the same. That's how you get annoyed. Then bored. And then you die. A lot.

To be fair, there are a hell of a lot of similarities to *Dead Island*, but they're superficial at best. Facial animations, for example, are still laughable; in a city filled with zombies, it's the healthy people that are gurning, eye-rolling weirdos. And the story is an absolute heap of junk. You're a good guy doing bad things while getting tight with the local gangs quickly. There's also the bizarre dichotomy of being told 'You have X amount of time to get this done', while the time mechanics in-game require a day/night cycle. So your new storyline quest friends are all 'Crane, help us! We've got to get this done as quickly as we can!'; in their atrociously written/acted lines, but you can be off with your sidequest friends and they're

like, 'Yeah, bring back my bag from a zombified place. No rush, mate.' Which is a shame, because it's an easy negative to pick up on that doesn't matter to the fun you can be having; *Dying Light* has got so much more going on.

For starters, you need to be afraid of the zombies. You might be a big buff mandude (obviously), but you're weak as hell to start off with. You'll find a crappy old pipe, start wailing on zombies because hey, that's what you do. And you might take a few out, but then shitloads more appear. Oh god, you have to get out of there. Ah, wait, they're biting you to death. Wipe to black. And you're back in the nearest safehouse. Which, if you haven't secured a closer one yet by booting all the zombies out of it, might be absolutely miles away. At the earlier stages of the game, while you can carry an absurd amount of baseball bats and lead pipes around with you, you need to accept that you're just a dude, and running into a pile of zombies to mow them down with your mighty strength and nonsense weapons might feel initially awesome, but that's not this game. That's *Dead Rising*.

There's a hell of a lot more care that has been taken here with pacing and progression, but if you play it like any



△×× Yeah, there are obviously also a heap of fetch quests, but they're all made much more interesting with all them zombies zombing about.

other zombie game, charging into the fight immediately, then you're just going to wonder why it's so terrible. Using guns is a good example: you likely won't find a gun until a certain point of the game, which leads to a section based around shooting. And it's awesome. But then you're going to run into tougher enemies. This ever-escalating cold war of skills vs enemies is great; the pace of *Dying Light* is incredibly well-balanced, and as is always the case with having to earn your skills, it feels empowering once you master something new and then have to rise to a new challenge.

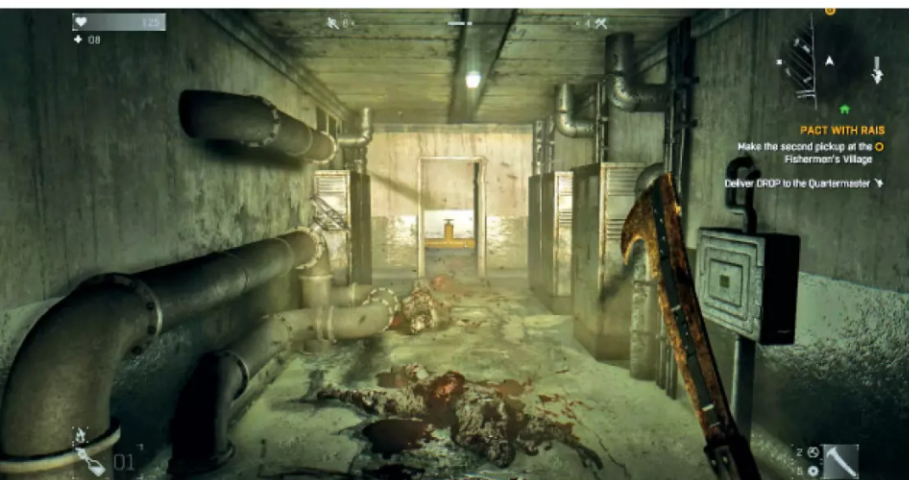
Levelling up is also remarkably well thought out. You've got three skill trees – Survival, Agility, and Power – and they all level up separately as you do more of those individual things. If you ignore the crafting side of things and go free running around the city, you're going to level up your Agility skill tree quicker, leading to being better at it and therefore doing more of it, and so on. And by the time you're at the bottom of one of your skill trees, you'll likely find that you have



① You health is low. Look for Consumables or try to create a Medkit.



“MOVEMENT ITSELF IS SO NATURAL THAT IT BECOMES SECOND NATURE QUICKLY”



△○×□ Combat is great, if initially a little frustrating. As soon as you start getting more skills, it becomes something deliciously brutal.

a different game or play style compared to those of other players, one tailored to how you want to play.

Movement around the city is so natural that it becomes second nature quickly, almost to Techland's detriment, as you just don't notice how easy and smooth it is because you're too busy just doing it. It's primarily a means of travelling, though there are a few platforming elements, but it's generous with hit detection. We had an unfortunate twenty minutes of getting stuck in a few things but aside from that, traversal of the city is great, despite the initial 'Oh god, aren't we done with parkour yet?' feeling. Just ignore that, it's only your silly self being a grumpy bastard, because how else are you alone going to travel around like a badass in a zombie apocalypse? All the alternatives are even dumber, while the free running thing actually does feel really fluid.

As great as the lack of handholding is in *Dying Light*, Techland still has to work out some kinks; it makes no sense to suddenly throw in a cool stealth

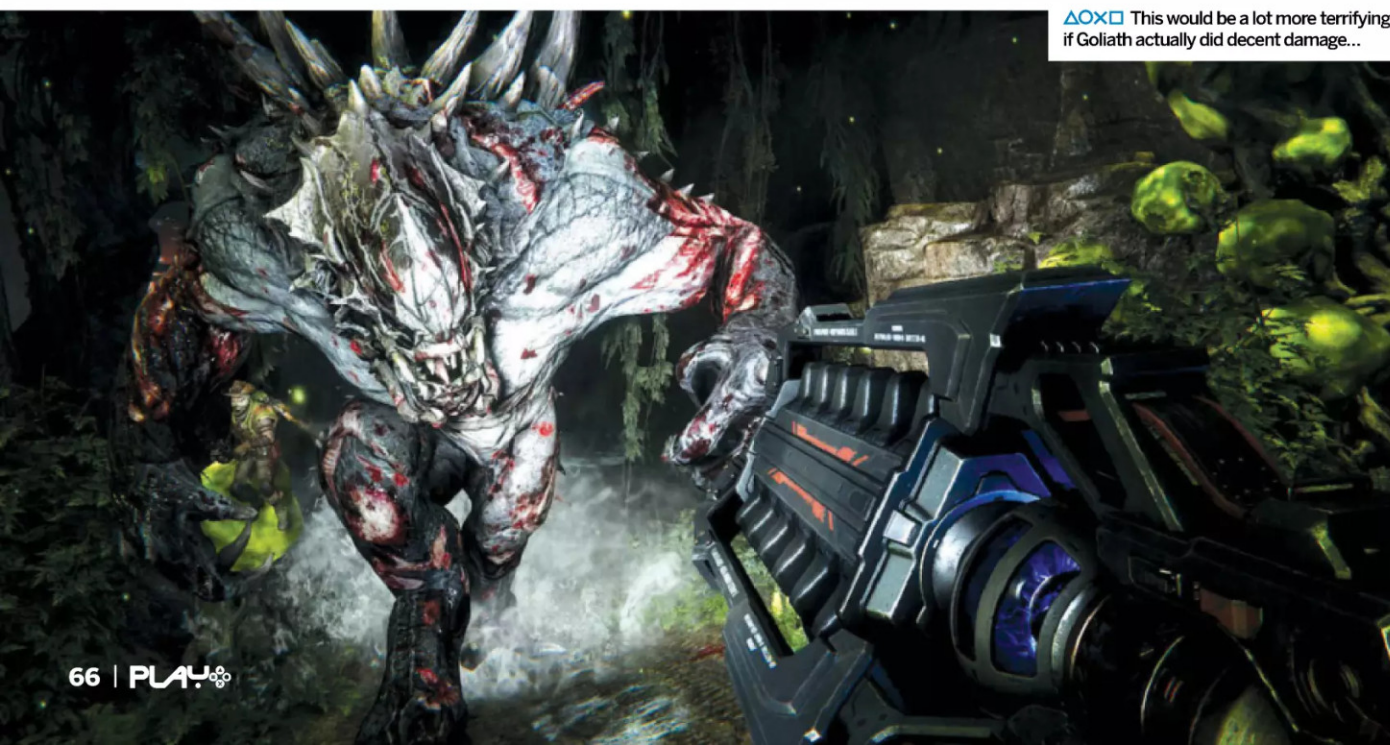
section or a gunfight, but not actually say that's what it is. Here's a corridor full of zombies, SPLAT! SQUISH! YEAH! And now here's a bit where you need to be really sneaky – nope, you went in hot, you're dead. Oh, and they're still on high alert for you. Great. Still, it's ridiculously refreshing to find this sort of game not only challenging, but as well paced as it is. *Dying Light* is a hell of a lot of fun, and we didn't even get around to talking about the online Be The Zombie mode (which is exactly how it sounds and so good). Just remember: it's not *Dead Island*. It's a proper goddamn zombie apocalypse and you need to level up.

Rebecca Richards

VERDICT

With some crazy fun online elements and a badass sense of actual achievement, *Dying Light* is the zombie game we've been waiting for. Just mute those terrible voices.

85%



Evolve

What friends are for



THIS IS A tale of two games. On the one hand you have an accomplished, if lightweight, squad-based

shooter with a unique hook. On the other, you have an unbalanced, unkempt solo shooter that's near enough impossible to win and impossible to truly enjoy – it's confusing, really. *Evolve* is a game that relies entirely on other people doing what they're supposed to do, and as you know, this basically never happens when you're playing online. However, we appreciate that this isn't the fairest of criticisms, as 2K didn't invent idiots. And for all its flaws, there are some really fun elements to enjoy in *Evolve* if you know where to look.

The concept itself is great, pitting four humans with specific roles against a fifth player as a monster. Much has been said before now about the three stages of evolution that the monster goes through (the clue is in the name), and these are reached by eating the vast swathes of wildlife that inhabit the game's overgrown, irrepressible jungle environments. Due to the monster's relative weakness whilst at

Stage One, the hunters need to get to it quickly and destroy the buggger before it grows any larger.

This poses problems. On the one hand, a good monster player can make it near enough impossible for the hunters to catch up with it, resulting in ten minutes of running around aimlessly in the jungle before the monster returns in its strongest form, which simply becomes boring after a few hours. On the other hand, a poor monster player can often be found by the hunters at Stage One, and it's game over before any of the fun really begins. This game is at its frantic best when the monster is at full power and the four hunters have to really work together to bring it down, and so delaying this scenario with some predictable cat-and-mouse shenanigans seems ill thought-out. It's a great idea on paper, but sloppily executed.

This is, of course, assuming that you're sticking to Hunt mode. If you pick Evacuation, you're thrust into a mini campaign that lasts five rounds, each sporting a different game type. We found Defend to be the most interesting, as the monster starts the round at Stage Three, and has a host of annoying helpers with it.

There is a pretty robust levelling system at work, too. Perks are unlocked as you level up, and they can be used for each of the characters. Each class sports three different characters, each with different weapons and play styles. It's surprisingly deep, really, and you will find yourself becoming something of a specialist with certain characters as you rack up the hours.

When you get into combat you have more of a chance to experiment with each of the hunters' abilities, and there is quite a substantial range. Experimenting with

DETAILS

PUBLISHER
2K

DEVELOPER
Turtle Rock

PSN PRICE
£59.99

PLAYERS
1-5

INSTALL SIZE
50 GB

AGE RATING
16

TWITTER
@EvolveGame

Trophies 50
1 3 5 41



△×□ Learning your entire arsenal as well as your role is simply crucial.



“A POOR MONSTER PLAYER CAN BE FOUND AT STAGE ONE, AND IT’S GAME OVER BEFORE ANY OF THE FUN BEGINS”

each of the classes, we found the shooting mechanics to be pretty decent, and when you do your job properly as, say, the Medic or the Trapper, it can be genuinely satisfying. It’s when others don’t do their jobs that things go really wrong, and that’s something that’s totally out of anyone’s control – it’s just an unavoidable trap that *Evolve* falls right into and suffers for.

The fact that the game is near enough unplayable if you’re on a team of idiots not doing what they’re supposed to (or playing with the *awful* AI) is symptomatic of the unfortunate balancing issues that are at the heart of *Evolve*, and this is never more apparent than when you come up against the Wraith. If you’re a Monster player, picking the Wraith is essentially picking Easy mode. It’s like a cheat.

These balancing issues extend to the human characters as well, but despite

their conspicuous nature, they still fail to ruin *Evolve* completely. This is a game that can be praised for its concept – for its courage, really. It’s refreshing to sit down and play a shooter with some new ideas, but said ideas just need to be tightened up. Whether or not patches can fix certain issues remains to be seen, but there is a framework here that could become something great going forward.

Steve Holmes

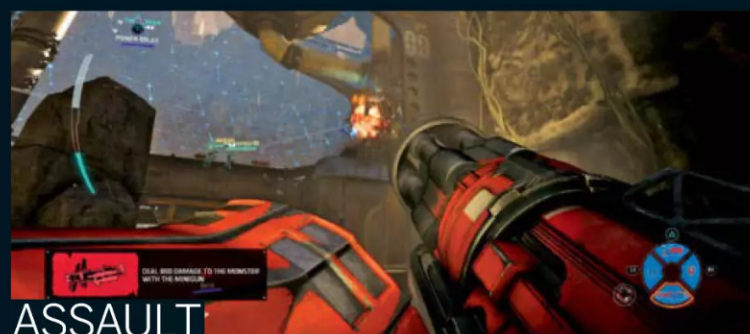
VERDICT

With the right people on your side, *Evolve* can be a surprising blast. However, get lumped with utter idiots, or the shoddy AI, and it quickly becomes very, very frustrating.

66%

KNOW YOUR ROLE

Stop getting Evolve wrong



ASSAULT

Pick Hyde and get the minigun and flamethrower on the go. He also has some gas mines that are helpful once the arena is up. Bear in mind that bringing the pain isn’t your only responsibility – due to your relative expendability you should be at the front of the pack, zipping round the map and disturbing the beast. If it kills you when you’re alone, so what? At least the others are okay.



MEDIC

Only play as Lazarus if you’re actually good at playing as Lazarus. His rifle is useful, but not being able to proactively heal people is difficult to get your head around as a medic. Play it safe, pick Val and use your healing gun from range to keep your mates in the fight. The tranquilliser rifle is useful at times, too. Just stay safe – once you’re dead, it’s curtains, especially at Stage Three.



TRAPPER

Abe has tracking darts that can be handy if you can snag the monster with one early on, and Griffin has a harpoon launcher and has a Nigel Thornberry moustache. Maggie is the way to go if you want to win, though. Her pet, Daisy, tracks the monster and can revive other team members. Whomever you play as, though, get that Mobile Arena up whenever you can – it’s essential.



SUPPORT

Bucket has a removable UAV head and is, surprisingly, quite amusing. Use the UAV as soon as you land on Shear and try to get eyes on the target ASAP. If you get into a pickle then mash the invisibility button and you and your pals will vanish – particularly useful if you’re on the wrong end of a Goliath rock throw. Get your sentry guns set up nice and early when you get down to business.

MONSTER

Pick the Wraith and you’ll win.



BASS

94'07

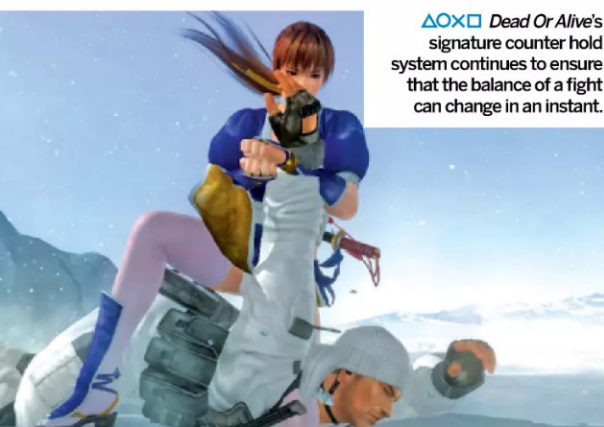
ZACK

REVIEW

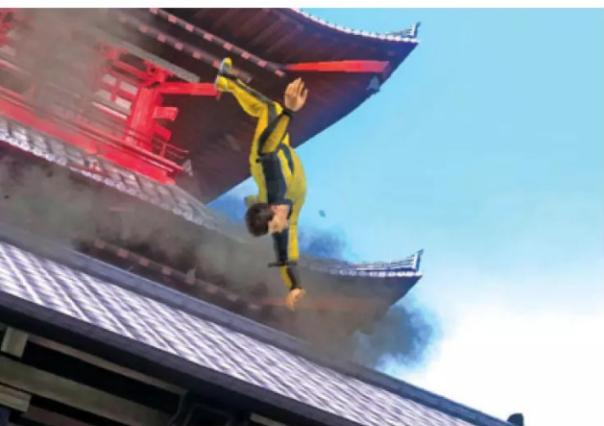
DEAD OR ALIVE 5: LAST ROUND

PS4

HI COUNTER STRIKE



△○×□ Dead Or Alive's signature counter hold system continues to ensure that the balance of a fight can change in an instant.



△○×□ Seeing newcomer Honoka dropkick a massive, murderous cyborg is funnier than it should be.

Dead Or Alive 5: Last Round

Has Tecmo's brawler punched itself out?



DETAILS

PUBLISHER
Koei Tecmo Europe

DEVELOPER
Team Ninja

PSN PRICE
£34.99

PLAYERS
1-4

INSTALL SIZE
10.4 GB

AGE RATING
16

TWITTER
@TeamNINJASTudio

Trophies 48



THERE'S SOMETHING TELLING about the way Team Ninja promotes *Dead Or Alive 5: Last*

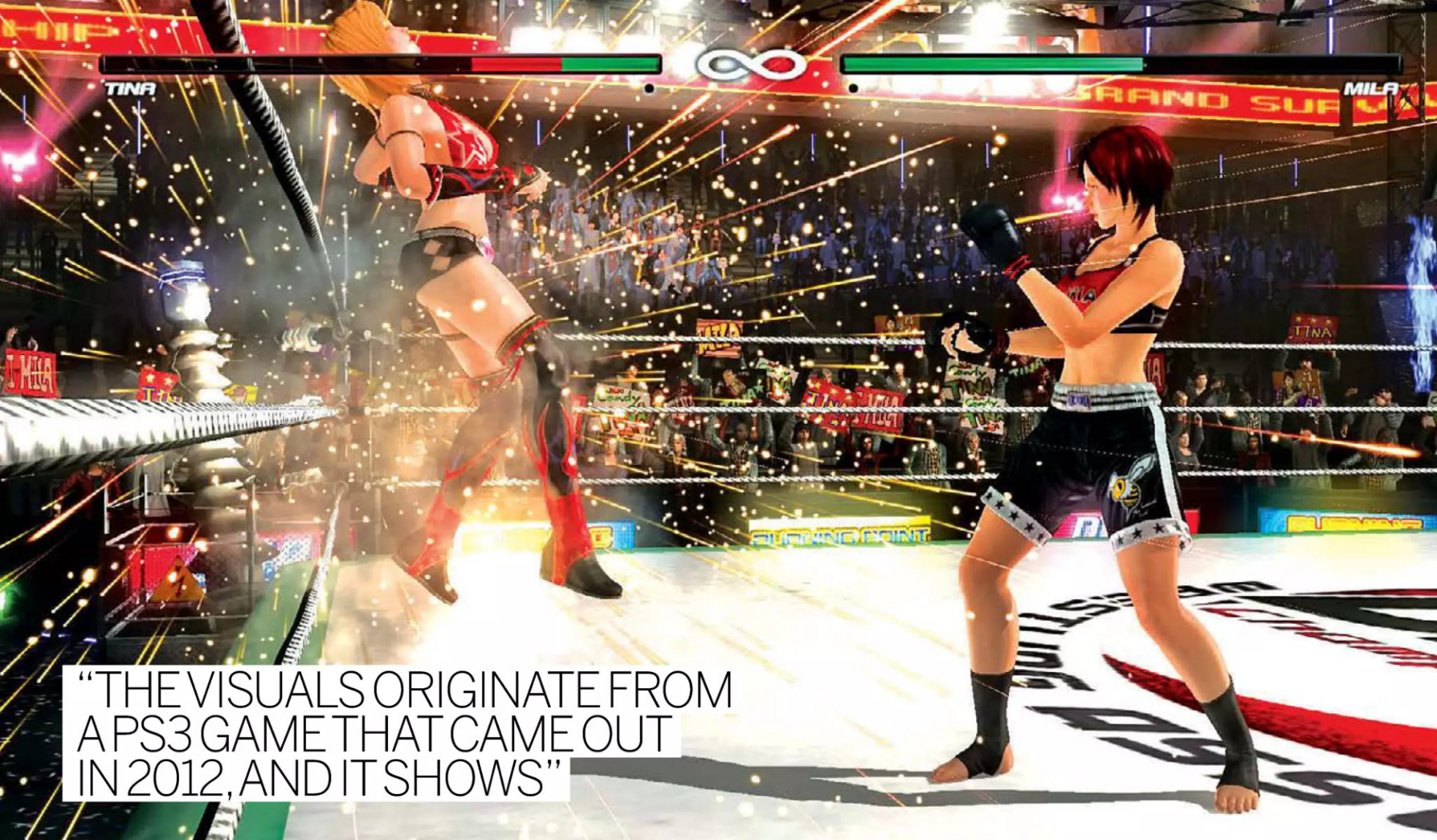
Round. Just as with the three previous releases of the game, the team's preference is to refer to the game as 'fighting entertainment' rather than a fighting game – much in the same way as the WWE promotes its product as 'sports entertainment' rather than professional wrestling. In both cases, the core genre remains an integral part of what's on offer, but the goal is to draw in a wide audience by placing a particular emphasis on the surrounding spectacle.

What this means in practical terms is that the things which take effort to learn in most fighting games – combos, reversals and the like – are easy to perform in *Dead Or Alive 5: Last Round*. Every player is capable of pulling off moves that look awesome and the course of any fight can change in an

instant, which makes it the perfect game to play with friends. Unfortunately, hardened fighting game fans will find that the game doesn't offer as much scope for advanced play as the likes of the *Tekken* and *Virtua Fighter* series. Of course, this is nothing new, as this was true of *Dead Or Alive 5* when it first arrived two and a half years ago.

What is new in this edition of the game is the character roster, which includes the debut of high school girl, Honoka, and the reanimated Raidou, making his first PlayStation appearance since his role as the final boss in the original *Dead Or Alive*. Raidou lives up to his imposing appearance, being strong in all areas except speed, but while Honoka is speedier, her move set isn't quite as combo-friendly as you might expect. She actually borrows several moves from the grapplers including the bear hug, a technique which looks hilarious when delivered by a diminutive teenager.





"THE VISUALS ORIGINATE FROM A PS3 GAME THAT CAME OUT IN 2012, AND IT SHOWS"



△×△ That's Ryu Hayabusa from *Ninja Gaiden* getting smashed there.



The game also includes every character featured in previous editions of the game, including *Virtua Fighter* crossover characters such as Akira, and those originally sold as DLC such as Nyotengu. Also included is a pair of new stages which hark back to older games, The Danger Zone and Crimson.

Given the focus on spectacle, you might think that the move to PS4 for *Dead Or Alive 5: Last Round* would result in something of a graphical feast. The game still does some things that we're waiting for other games to catch up to, particularly the way dirt and damage accumulate on fighters, but sadly the upgrades are rather unspectacular overall. The game runs at



TROPHY CABINET



THE POWER OF TWO
Pairing any two of the ninjas together will produce unique throws, as well as the likes of Tina/Bass.



GESUNDHEIT!
Send your opponent flying towards the bullseye in the Show stage with a Power Blow, then enjoy your ridiculous reward.

the expected 60 frames per second in 1080p, particle effects have been added to explosive environmental attacks, and there are some small enhancements to the appearance of the characters.

This leaves us to focus on what hasn't been enhanced, which happens to be quite a lot. Jagged edges are visible throughout the game due to the lack of anti-aliasing, and environments appear to have been given very little attention. Background objects stand out more than they should due to their low-polygon models, and there are instances where low-resolution textures are particularly noticeable – especially during throw animations, when you get a good look at the floor. We'll definitely

take performance over prettiness when it comes to fighters and the game never disappoints in that regard, but the visuals originate from a PS3 game that came out in 2012, and it shows.

If you're an existing owner of *Dead Or Alive 5: Ultimate* on PS3, you're able to retain your existing DLC purchases in *Dead Or Alive 5: Last Round*, which is welcome for die-hard fans. However, if your interest in the old version has waned, the number of extra stages and characters on offer just doesn't provide enough new gameplay to justify making the upgrade. For newcomers, the game is worthy of consideration – particularly given the price point. If you can accept its limitations, chiefly the lack of depth and the lack of visual upgrade, *Dead Or Alive 5: Last Round* is a solid game with a lot of content which will provide some great multiplayer entertainment.

Nick Thorpe

VERDICT

It is the definitive version of a good fighting game, but the limited visual upgrades for PS4 fall way short of our expectations and its age shows as a result of that.

71%

Grim Fandango Remastered

Bonefied classic



ALSO ON VITA

FOR A GAME that's regarded as a cult classic, *Grim Fandango* has suffered an unusually ethereal existence.

Unavailable to be purchased new and difficult to get running on modern PCs, the game has been inaccessible for anyone not willing to fiddle with fan-made mods or cracked versions for years. In that sense, the best thing about the remastered version of the game is not that it's got updated visuals, or an optional director's commentary, but simply that it gives everyone a way to play it. Upon its return, however, you have to wonder whether *Grim Fandango*'s reputation has been unduly enhanced by its absence. Without the mists of time clouding our vision, does *Grim Fandango* shine with the brilliance that we've all accepted it possesses? The short answer is yes, though in reality, things are a little more complex and less binary than that.

One of the major strengths of *Grim Fandango* when it first released was its art design and that still shines through, even with the updated visuals turned off. The mythology and aesthetics of the Mexican Day Of The Dead festival – which provides inspiration for the game's set-up – are combined with an Art Deco visual style that reflects the distinctly noir tone of the adventure and the world itself. That striking, stylish combination

still feels original all these years later. In combination with a soundtrack that mirrors *Grim*'s Mexican-noir hybrid nature, equal parts mariachi and jazz, the game fosters a real sense of time and place that makes it easy to buy into the world and its characters.

Of course, that's also helped by the story itself. Our hero, Manny, is a Grim Reaper; in this world, that means he is a travel agent, able to sell the newly deceased travel packages to move onto the next world. Circumstances see Manny having to take off on a dangerous journey, set against the backdrop of corruption and double-crossing you'd

expect from a noir-inspired fiction. It can occasionally test the limits of believability – the idea that Manny falls in love after one short conversation discussing travel packages is transparently ridiculous – but any issues we might have with the story are minor. With its well-drawn characters and excellent pacing, *Grim Fandango* tells a story that we were more than happy to experience for a second time.

It's worth mentioning that *Grim*'s story takes place over the period of four years, something that really makes it stand out. Moving from one place to another as you skip forward to different periods during Manny's journey benefits the game in

DETAILS

PUBLISHER
Double Fine

DEVELOPER
In-house

PRICE
£11.99

PLAYERS
1

INSTALL SIZE
4.2 GB

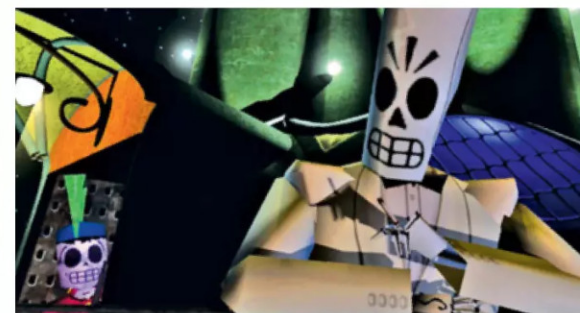
AGE RATING
12

TWITTER
@DoubleFine

Trophies 48



ΔOX□ The world is populated with bizarre characters – take this apathetic dead clown, for instance.



NOSTALGIA TRIP

Want to revisit the glory days of the LucasArts adventure game? *Grim Fandango's* not your only option



THE SECRET OF MONKEY ISLAND

Perhaps LucasArts' most beloved and well-known adventure game, you can pick up the remastered version of the first iteration of the *Monkey Island* series on PS3.



MONKEY ISLAND 2 LECHUCKS REVENGE

The brilliant sequel to *Monkey Island* has also had a special edition release on PS3, meaning you can pick up straight where you left off after the first game.



DAY OF THE TENTACLE

Double Fine is following up on *Grim Fandango* with a remaster of the *Day Of The Tentacle* for PS4, though there's no release date yet.

"GRIM FANDANGO TELLS A STORY THAT WE WERE MORE THAN HAPPY TO EXPERIENCE A SECOND TIME"

so many ways. By the end, there's a real sense that you've been on an epic adventure and seen the world and its people change. That aforementioned sense of place that *Grim* has is also aided by the fact that you get to visit different parts of the world and interact with its inhabitants in different ways, depending on Manny's varying positions of power.

Speaking of interaction, the bread and butter of *Grim Fandango* is in solving item-based puzzles in the classic adventure game format established by the company that originally developed the game, LucasArts. It's arguably in this aspect that *Grim* shows its age the most. There are some rather nonsensical puzzles which require leaps of logic to solve and others that feel needlessly finicky by modern standards. It's by no means as bad as some other adventure games in that aspect, and the majority of the puzzles are well designed, but there are enough of the more arbitrary ones for it to be noticeable.

If there's something that really dampens this remaster, though, it's the bugs. On multiple occasions we saw characters flicker in and out of existence and, in one instance, we lost over an hour of progress due to getting stuck in an elevator which we couldn't leave. That kind of shoddiness is a disappointment in a game that is positioned as being a definitive version. Should that be enough to put you off? No. *Grim Fandango* has aged remarkably well and it is a wonderful adventure game whether you've played it before or not.

Paul Walker-Emig

VERDICT

The technical quality of the remaster might be in question, but the quality of the game itself is not. The odd illogical puzzle aside, *Grim Fandango* holds up incredibly well.

83%

REVIEW ROUND-UP

NOT ONLY IS it the first instalment in this issue's review round up, *Chrysalis* is also the first episode in Dontnod's intriguing new videogame series, **LIFE IS STRANGE [A]**. It shares many similarities with Telltale games like *The Walking Dead* and *The Wolf Among Us*, in that it is a story-focused game based around making choices that may come back to bite you later down the line. One of the key differences here is that you have to ability to rewind time in order to experiment with different choices and to solve simple puzzles (the inclusion of the latter refreshing in light of the fact that they seem to have disappeared from Telltale games). That sounds game breaking in a title that's about choice and consequence, but it's really not; the ramifications of your actions are not immediately apparent, so you're not able to avoid outcomes you don't like by rewinding. The other way in which *Life Is Strange* marks itself out from Telltale is

its tone and aesthetic sensibilities. There's a filmic quality to the game, in that it has a clear directorial vision painted with wonderful visuals lit with warm hues and a soundtrack that enhances the high-school, indie movie feel it seems to be reaching for. The episode's ending has us concerned that *Life Is Strange* could lose the grounded, melancholic tone that makes this first instalment so intriguing, but it's a brilliant start and we're eager to play the next episode.

"WITH ALL THE PROTAGONISTS INTRODUCED, GAME OF THRONES SHOULD FIND ITS FLOW AS IT MOVES INTO EPISODE THREE"

From one episodic game to another, Telltale's **GAME OF THRONES [B]** is now in full swing with episode two, *The Lost Lords*, available to download. Or rather, it should be. The usual formula of

establishing your key characters and their story in the first episode, before starting to ramp things up in the second, is stalled somewhat here by the introduction of two new characters. We've not got a problem with Telltale trying something new, but in this case, the need to continue developing the stories established from the first episode, as well as establish some new ones, leaves the game feeling like it is perhaps spinning too many plates at once. Having said all that, the experience is still an enjoyable one overall and there's certainly no reason why anyone who enjoyed the first episode should be put off from continuing with this one. With all the protagonists now introduced (we hope), *Game Of Thrones* should find its flow as it moves into episode three.



B



A

ΔOX□ *Life Is Strange* takes the time rewinding mechanics from *Remember Me* and places them in an episodic adventure setting.





ΔOX□ This episode of *Game Of Thrones* we are treated to an appearance of series favourite, Jon Snow. Not the newscaster.

If you're one of those who has criticised the likes of *Life Is Strange* and *Game Of Thrones* for a lack of interactivity, then you best steer well clear of **KING ODDBALL [C]**. It's got a distinctive and attractive painterly art style, but that's about where the interest ends. The titular King Oddball swings rocks back and forth from his tongue, and all you have to do is press X to have him release the rocks in order to try and take out the tanks and helicopters that litter the screen. It works well enough for what it is, but the sense that you're playing a mobile game ported over to console is inescapable. Can we imagine giving it a bash on our phones now and again? Perhaps. Does that mean it's the kind of game we want to play on PlayStation? Not really, no.

It's unfortunate that *King Oddball*'s failure to inspire us carries over to **KICK & FENNICK [D]** to some degree. This is a platformer in which, instead of jumping, you fire a huge gun in the opposite direction to which you want to travel in order to propel yourself across the



screen. You can either control it with the sticks or use the Vita's touch pad to adjust the arc of your jump. In fairness, there is some fun to be had from the slightly different slant on platforming that the game offers, but there's just something about it that fails to excite. A combination of uninspired visuals, level design that can interrupt the flow of the game and the fact that the new mechanics it gradually introduces don't do enough to freshen things up, mean that the game doesn't draw enough from an initially intriguing mechanical premise. *Kick & Fennick* is a decent enough platformer, but there's nothing about it that really makes it stand out.

Thankfully, we can end this roundup on a positive note. If we had to sum up



ΔOX□ The rather uninspired mechanics and visuals mean that *Kick & Fennick* will probably blur into obscurity.

APOTHEON [E] in a sentence, we would call it *Guacamelee* in Greece. Though it's got a much darker and decidedly more serious tone than the charming Mexican adventure, it's similar in that it is a 2D Metroidvania with melee combat that draws inspiration from the culture that it is based on – the mythology of Greece is not only used as a basis for its story, but bleeds through into its heavily stylised visuals. There are also a number of RPG elements in *Apotheon* – you can switch between a variety of different weapons and shields, craft items and upgrade your armour, for example. If there is an aspect of the formula that lets it down, we'd suggest that melee combat can get a little too chaotic when multiple foes are involved, making it difficult to pick out where everyone is and what they are doing. On the whole, though, *Apotheon* is a well-crafted, stylish and surprisingly deep Metroidvania game.

ΔOX□ *Apotheon*'s Greek aesthetics and Metroidvania, *Guacamelee*-esque gameplay make for an outing that is worth your time.



PUBLISHER ACTIVISION | DEVELOPER TREYARCH | FORMAT PS2

RELEASE DATE 9 JULY 2004 | PLAY SCORE 79% | METACRITIC SCORE 80/100



The Making Of... SPIDER-MAN 2

Superhero games are a famously tricky beast, and developers have long struggled to get the right balance of empowering players and challenging them. Ed Smith returns to one of the greatest examples of getting it right in PlayStation history



When Activision bought Treyarch back in 2001, nobody really noticed. The studio, staffed at the time by about ten people, had scored a critical, but not commercial, hit with *Die By The Sword* back in 1998 and was then working on a PlayStation 2 port of Neversoft's PS1 *Spider-Man* game, by touching up the controls and upscaling some of the game's textures. As Tomo Moriwaki, one Treyarch's original members puts it, "the remake project was seen by Activision as just another part of the big strategy, a little more meat in their ranks. We'd done a good job of selling our technical expertise, but *Die By The Sword* had sold something like 50,000 copies, so as a publisher they weren't super excited by us."

But that all changed when Columbia Pictures announced it was producing *Spider-Man*, directed by Sam Raimi and due for release in 2002. The Neversoft remake project was binned, Moriwaki and the rest of Treyarch were assigned to creating the movie tie-in game. "We ran off the conventional wisdom that the film wouldn't be very good," Moriwaki explains. "Plus, we knew this was a tie-in game, and tie-in games were all crap back then, so we didn't necessarily feel awesome about ourselves. But still, we had a fine time of it. The team got along with each other."

Despite Treyarch's reservations, the *Spider-Man* movie was a hit, and, bolstered by its success, the tie-in game flew off of shelves as well. Treyarch, now 35 staff members strong, had won Activision over with their tie-in, and the team was immediately put to work on producing another tie-in for the next *Spider-Man* movie, which was then due to launch in 2004. Jamie Frstrom, another original member of Treyarch, was bumped at this point from programmer to technical director. He started work on what would become *Spider-Man 2*'s most beloved feature: the swinging system. "Late in the development of *Spider-Man*, I'd been

△○×□ Mobility is key to a good Spider-Man game, and Treyarch nailed it.



△OX□ Webs are just as useful in combat as in getting around New York. Why beat bad guys up when you can tie them up instead?

staying late and prototyping this swinging mechanic. I ended up showing it around to people in the office, including Treyarch's founder, Peter Akemann," Fristrom explains. "But it was considered too hard to implement – we were very close to launch – and so it was tabled. However, when I was asked to be technical director on *Spider-Man 2*, I said 'sure, so long as we can use those swinging mechanics.'

"For the first two months, there were 12 of us working exclusively on the swinging," continues Moriwaki, who served as *Spider-Man 2*'s creative director. "After that, we had 25 people working it for another four months. First, we put web connection nodes on the top corners of each building.

"THIS WAS A TIE-IN GAME, AND TIE-IN GAMES WERE CRAP BACK THEN. WE DIDN'T FEEL AWESOME ABOUT OURSELVES"

That didn't create great results, so we kept putting more and more data into the buildings, going from having nodes along the entire edges of rooftops, to nodes across the entirety of buildings, and then on to things like lampposts and trees. The game would send out a cone and then work out where nearby you could connect. Once it found somewhere, your web would stick to it."

As well as this system, Treyarch began work on its redesign of New York City. This was back in 2002, when competition in the open-world game market was getting tough. *GTA* was cleaning up, along with *Driver 3* and *The Simpsons: Hit And Run*. *Spider-Man 2* had a gimmick in the form of its swing-based travel, but still, Treyarch had a lot to focus on. Building NYC became the team's focal point.

"Our New York wasn't that realistic," says Fristrom. "We put lots of T-intersections in there – lots more than in real life – so that players would have lots of places where they'd need to make decisions about where to go. Plus, the sizes of the buildings were going to be a lot more irregular."

"We ended with a soft rule that the height of buildings had to be about 40 metres," continues Moriwaki, "though 40 metres is taller than a lot of the shorter buildings in New York City. We also clipped out a lot of streets and created just a kind of loose network, connecting North to South, East to West. There were some efforts to better match New York, but they often made the locomotion feel inferior – it wasn't

as fun to swing along those places, like Broadway or Washington Heights."

But all of this focus on geography started to impact negatively on the other areas of *Spider-Man 2*'s development. "New York became the main character in our game," Moriwaki says. "I think that if we had

treated some of the other parts with the same importance, they would have worked out better. For example, we were streaming a whole city, with lots of density, and there was no fog plain, meaning you could see out as far as you wanted. Implementing that made the game suffer visually."

In Fristrom's opinion, focusing on swinging and the in-game version of NYC affected more than just *Spider-Man 2*'s graphics. A few months before the game's launch, the campaign and single-player missions weren't up to scratch, prompting him to leave the programming desk and go work on design in order to bring them up to standard.

"About two thirds into production, design was falling behind," he says. "We had a lot of missions that were just frustrating and the animation and the voiceover weren't

BLUFFER'S GUIDE

Everything you need to know in five facts



1 It's an open-world superhero game based on the 2004 film from Sam Raimi.



2 It's loved for its swinging mechanic, which allowed you to traverse New York City by air.



3 Developed by Treyarch, which would go on to work on the popular *Call Of Duty* series.



4 Featured performances from the main cast, as well as tutorials by Bruce Campbell.



5 Its web swinging formed the basis for *Energy Hook*, a game heading to the PlayStation 4.



△○×□ Special moves can be used to subdue multiple hostiles at once. Useful, as enemies don't hold back...



△○×□ Only Rocksteady's *Arkham* games have made players really feel like superheroes since.

FURTHER READING



OLDER – SPIDER-MAN (PS1)

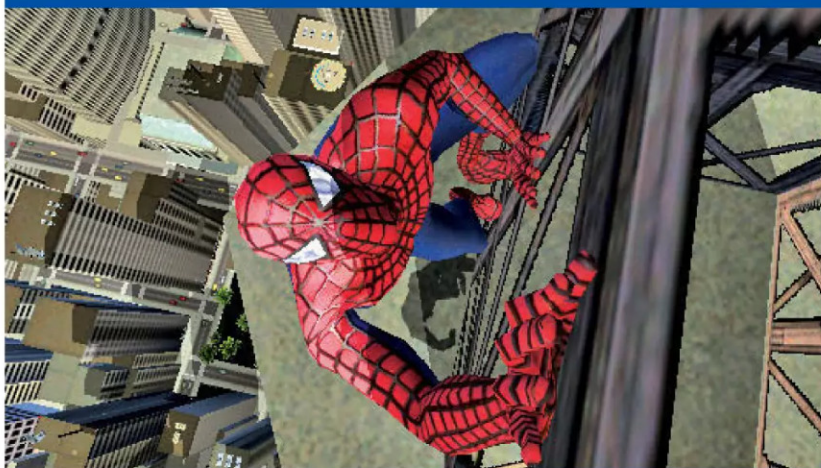
Developed by Neversoft, the now defunct studio behind the original *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater* games, this 3D action-platformer laid the groundwork for Treyarch's *Spider-Man* efforts.



NEWER – PROTOTYPE (PS3)

An open-world superhero game, directly inspired by *Spider-Man 2*. The tone is a lot darker, granted, but from the free running-based travel to the New York City setting, you can see *Spider-Man*'s influence.

STANDOUT MOMENT



SPEEDY SWINGING

Using the city to go as fast as most supercars

Call us unoriginal, but there's nothing like swinging along the streets of NYC. *Spider-Man 2* featured a speed gauge, and challenged you to best your fastest swinging speed. Your best bet was to crawl all the way to the summit of the Empire State Building, look south, then jump off towards the Flatiron Building, easy recognisable because of

its triangular roof. There was a big fat street leading right up to it, and a straight line, basically, from the roof of the Empire State right down the avenue. With this trick, you could hit 200 miles per hour. Of course, you'd always be pushing it to get 205, maybe 210. It was testament to how the NYC of *Spider-Man 2* was designed to best suit the swinging system.

all that great. So I bumped one of the programmers to technical director and moved on to work on some of the levels."

"The linear campaign was extremely hit or miss," adds Moriwaki. "Some of it was on the verge of broken and the boss fights were all over the road. Plus, in hindsight, there was not a lot of point to the combat system. Every move did basically the same as every other move in terms of practical result – it all beat bad guys up with the same efficiency. It was a fun toy, but the city and the control scheme were still covering the myriad other weaknesses the game had."

Treyarch got a little lucky in 2004. *Spider-Man 2*, the movie, was pushed from its original May 7th launch date to June 30th, giving the studio time to do last minute design work and iron out some bugs. The delay was a blessing – Frisstrom says that, given the movie's original release date, Treyarch's game would have had a "rough landing" but still, there wasn't time to solve all of the problems. *Spider-Man 2*'s boss fights were slated by critics, as well as the various issues with mission design and layout that Frisstrom and Moriwaki had tried to address. Despite spending two years in

development – which was a long time back in the early Noughties, when games usually wrapped inside 18 months – *Spider-Man 2* wasn't polished to the extent Treyarch would have liked.

Still, it was well-received, scoring a healthy 80 out of 100 on Metacritic. Plus, it influenced a generation of open-ended superhero games. Eric Holmes, a friend of Frisstrom, was privy to pre-launch builds of both *Spider-Man* and *Spider-Man 2*, and took them as inspiration for *Hulk*, the 2003 tie-in that he directed for Radical Entertainment. Eventually, Holmes would graduate to lead designer on another open-world superhero title, albeit one not based on a film, *Prototype*. All of these games are rooted in *Spider-Man 2*, so it is no wonder that it regularly makes lists of the best movie tie-in games of all time.

But both Moriwaki and Frisstrom remain detached. They see *Spider-Man 2* as a fortunate, semi-success, and as a relic of a time when game development was a draining business to be in. "We didn't have anyone really who was over the age of 30," says Moriwaki.

"The average age, I think, was 24, and that was across the whole team, usually



△×□ Swinging proved so enjoyable that it was often hard to stay on task during missions.

you have leads who are older, but we were just a bunch of stupid kids. That probably meant we were defiant and caught up in our own crap, convinced we were right, everyone else was wrong. It was a fascinating experiment, I guess, giving all those millions of dollars to a bunch of kids, but personally, being that young meant I had a pretty stupid outlook. Activision and I, we got into a lot of arguments over the course of the project simply because, like a lot of developers who started in the Nineties, I had this mentality that developers and publishers had to disagree for some reason. We were young and thought that money was dirty – we thought

lot of pressure. Our lead programmer, who was handling that system whereby parts of the city would load in and out as you swung through them, would come to me saying 'I know it was meant to be done by now, but it's going to take until then, I'm sorry.' Part of my job became just trying to keep him calm – getting him to take a coffee break, go for a walk, you know, that kind of thing. We really were coming in hard."

"It wasn't good for us in terms work/life balance," remembers Moriwaki. "I do have some guilt over that. But then, this was what game development was like back in the early Noughties. There was always a lot of crunch."

"IT WASN'T GOOD FOR US IN TERMS OF WORK/LIFE BALANCE. BUT THEN, THIS WAS WHAT GAME DEVELOPMENT WAS LIKE BACK IN THE EARLY NOUGHTIES"

that the publisher, because it wanted to make money, was immoral somehow. It would have dramatically improved my life – my stress levels and indignation levels – if I had just gotten over myself."

"It's human nature to try to get as much stuff done in your development window," explains Fristrom. "Ultimately, though, it ends up with you not being able to finish things off – you have to ship. There was a

After *Spider-Man 2*, Moriwaki worked on *Call Of Duty: Finest Hour*, one of Treyarch's earliest *Call Of Duty* games. However, he left big game development shortly after and now co-manages HyperKinetic, a studio that provides freelance support to other small studios.

Fristrom also stayed on after *Spider-Man 2*, and was even moved up



TIE ME IN, TIE ME DOWN

When is a licensed game not a licensed game? When developers think outside the box...

Some of the best tie-in games are the ones that deviate from the source material. *Spider-Man 2* was pretty close to the movie, at least in terms of plot and Jamie Fristrom wishes the team had been given more freedom.

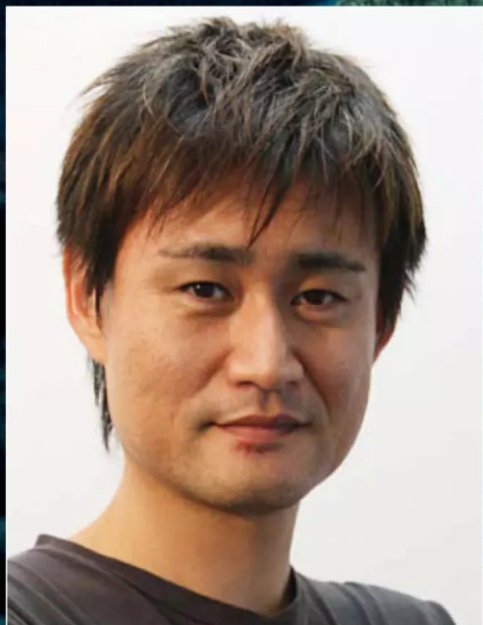
"I really liked that *Riddick* game, *Escape From Butcher Bay*," he explains. "It was totally different to the *Riddick* films and served more as an extra piece of the franchise than a true tie-in. I wish we could have done something like that with *Spider-Man*. A game studio with game funding, back then, couldn't match a movie studio with movie funding, so you ended up with something that simply wasn't as good as the film."

to be creative director on *Spider-Man 3*. But he left midway through development, saying that by the time the project, and Treyarch as a whole, had become subject to too much "oversight."

"I got promoted to creative director and I wanted to do these stealth missions, like Neversoft had in that original game. But that idea got shut down, and it showed that I wasn't really creatively in charge."

Fristrom eventually went into independent development and is finishing off *Energy Hook*, an action game with mechanics based on *Spider-Man 2*'s swinging technology. The game is due for an eventual release on the PS Store.

Looking back, despite the many plaudits *Spider-Man 2* has received over the years, Fristrom and Moriwaki see mainly the things that went wrong. "It was a slow process," Moriwaki concludes. "But by the time I was thinking of leaving, Activision had changed the culture at Treyarch. It didn't feel like a family any more. It was definitely time to move on."



INTERVIEW

PRESIDENT EVIL

Michiteru Okabe, producer on Resident Evil Revelations 2, talks episodic gaming, rejuvenating the series and what the future holds for survival horror

What was the attraction of taking *Resident Evil* down the episodic route?

One of the main things we are aiming for with this style of release is to give people the chance to experience the pleasure of waiting between episodes so they can talk to each other about the game – speculate, theorise and get online and communicate about what [the game] is doing. It is kind of like what you get with *Breaking Bad* or *Game Of Thrones* on television. If you watch in on the schedule, you'll get story revelations and a cliffhanger and so forth, and then you have to wait until the next one... that gives you this so-called 'water cooler moment', where you talk to your friends about what happened in the episode, about what you *want* to happen next. You can even go online and talk about what is going to happen next – and that was one of our main aims with *Resident Evil Revelations 2*.

The first *Resident Evil Revelations* game was somewhat episodic in its structure, if not its format, anyway – you had these recaps and 'next times' and so on. It was like watching a TV show, even

back then. We kind of wanted to take that, but do it properly: releasing it on a weekly basis (doing it *properly*, this time) and going back to the roots of survival horror were the two biggest focuses of both *Revelations* and *Revelations 2*. I hope users will find this quite a unique way to enjoy the game, and enjoy on the weekly basis it's made for.

“YOU COULD SAY THE SERIES IS AT SOMETHING OF A CROSSROADS”

What other episodic games have you looked at for inspiration for *Revelations 2*?

Obviously, *The Walking Dead* is one example of a game we've been looking at – I mean, that wasn't weekly by any means, in fact there's quite a large gap between episodes. It's nothing like our game in terms of how it plays – [Telltale] focuses a lot more on the adventure elements, but I guess that you could say we're similar with our third-person perspectives? Anyway, it was interesting to see

how well they pulled off what we are trying to do between episode one and two. Online, people were just talking endlessly about the story and what they would like to see in the next episode. That helped me and it made me realise the outcome for *Revelations 2* could definitely be the same with our *actual* weekly schedule.

Are you worried that the *Resident Evil* series has somewhat lost its appeal recently, and do you think *Revelations 2* will do anything to repair its image?

I think you could say the series is at something of a crossroads at the moment, especially as we are moving into a new hardware generation; it is a big next step.

We are always trying to be aware of user's needs and feedback, taking note of how people react to previous releases in the series and looking the reception of each game individually. We always want to bear those [reactions] in mind when we are working on future developments – and that's no different for *Revelations 2*.

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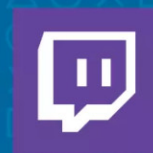
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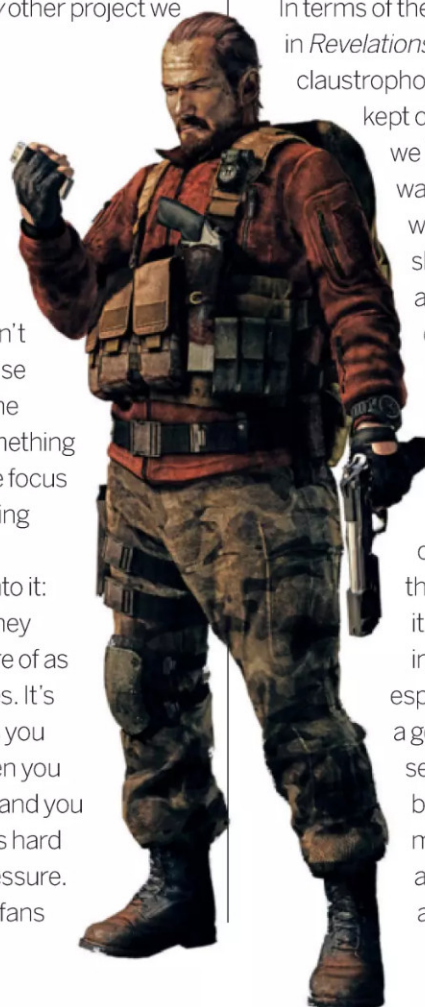


Will anything from *Revelations 2* perhaps inform the development of *Resident Evil 7*?

I'm only really involved with the development of *Revelations 2* right now, but I think when we get out of this project we can take a look back at how well it's done and apply that data to every other project we have going on...

Do you think the *Resident Evil* name has put more pressure on the development of *Revelations 2*?

Well, the first *Resident Evil* title I worked on was *Resident Evil: Operation Raccoon City*, and I don't know if you'd call it 'pressure' per se but the intensity and passion of the *Resident Evil* fans is certainly something you realise when you become the focus of it. [*Resident Evil*] is a long-running franchise, people have their own personal feelings that they put onto it: they love certain parts of it, and they want to see those parts taken care of as you make new entries in the series. It's a good pressure, though: it keeps you on the right road, I think. And when you are making a series that you love and you are making the next game in it, it's hard to complain about any kind of pressure. I always want the passions of the fans



and I will always listen to their thoughts and opinions during the course of development.

Did you learn anything from *Revelations* that you've taken further or gotten rid of completely?

In terms of the things that got a positive reaction in *Revelations*, we tried to keep that sense of claustrophobic tension you got from being kept on-board a cruise ship. Something we learned and tried to improve on was the pacing: alternating chapters would switch away from the cruise ship setting and take on a more action-oriented approach with a different set of characters. These were intended to be moments of relief from the tension – much faster – to give the player a break, and make the tense sections more claustrophobic once you got back into them, but the way they were received... well, it seemed the action didn't really fit into the game as well as we planned, especially when the team did such a good job making the cruise ship sections so tense. This time, there's been more of a creative focus on maintaining the claustrophobia aspect and trying not to move away from that too much.

Can you explain a the process of making *Revelations 2* co-op, when the series relied on single-player to make it a horror experience?

The motivation for including co-op, which first appeared in *Resident Evil 5*, was... it's been a series where there's always been a horror atmosphere and storyline, but depending on whether or not you're experienced with playing that kind of game, you might not have been able to get to the end and finish it in its entirety – it may have been too difficult, or it might just have been too scary for you! The dogs in the corridors are just a bit too much for some people! We felt that if we could include a secondary character that could either be an AI or a friend that could come over to your house or play online with you, it would help you get through [the game]. We had to be careful though, because having two people in a room is very different to having one person [in there], but we didn't want to ruin that horror atmosphere. So what we did in *Revelations 2* is rather than have two gun-toting agents, we'd balance it out with a character that is a bit more [untrained]. Claire [Redfield] – who's obviously used to this scenario – is paired with Moira [Burton] who's younger and doesn't use guns. You can't just go around blasting your way through the story. With Barry – he's a firearms veteran, yet for reasons you'll discover in the game, he finds an girl who he has to protect. So I think we've found a balance between having a useful secondary character or player with you without losing the horror atmosphere.

EXTENDED PLAY

MORTAL KOMBAT

The horizon is taking on a blood-red hue as we move ever closer to the release of *Mortal Kombat X*. With that April release looming, now is the perfect time to get reacquainted with the most over-the-top fighting game series of all time

“OSTENTATIOUS MORTAL KOMBAT IS THE BEST AND ULTIMATE MORTAL KOMBAT 3 KNOWS THAT”



PLAY KOMLETE EDITION

■ **SINCE ITS 2011** release, the *Mortal Kombat* reboot has had a bunch of DLC released that might just be enough to tempt you back. We're not so much talking about the classic outfits and Fatalities, but the additional characters. Those characters include Skarlet, Kenshi and, even better, Kratos from *God Of War* and Freddy Krueger of *Nightmare On Elm Street* fame. If you're

looking to jump into *Mortal Kombat* for the first time (we gave it 81% in issue 205, by the way, so it might just be worth it), all that extra content is included in the game's Komplete Edition. Then there is the Vita version of *Mortal Kombat* released back in May 2012. Again, it includes the DLC released for original PS3 version, as well as the new Challenge Tower mode.



REVISIT THE KLASSICS

■ **IF THINKING ABOUT** *Mortal Kombat* has elicited a pang of nostalgia in your violence-loving heart, don't forget that there's no need to go digging out old systems from your loft to play the games that started it all off. The *Mortal Kombat Arcade Kollection* is available on PS3, providing an easy means of revisiting *Mortal Kombat* (the original 1992 version, obviously, not the recent reboot), *Mortal Kombat II* and *Ultimate Mortal Kombat 3*. The last of those is unquestionably the best of the trio and, arguably, the best in the series. Why? It's the game that embraces the fact that *Mortal Kombat* is not really a technically sophisticated fighter, instead opting to ramp up the silliness that we all love. In other words, ostentatious *Mortal Kombat* is the best *Mortal Kombat* and *Ultimate Mortal Kombat 3* knows that.



READ THE KOMICS

■ **IF YOU'RE A** hardcore *Mortal Kombat* fan, one who's so invested so as to even care about *Mortal Kombat*'s story, there's a whole bunch of *Mortal Kombat* comics for you to read. Most recently, there are the *Mortal Kombat X* comic books released by DC to tie in with the new game. The series is framed as a prequel to the events of the

game that will provide backstory for its iconic characters. We can't vouch for whether they're any good or not and, let's face it, most tie-in stuff is trash. If you're invested to *Mortal Kombat* to the degree that you're showing interest in tie-in comics, though, you're probably going to jump in regardless of what we say.



TRY INJUSTICE: GODS AMONG US

■ **ARE YOU A** fan of the *Mortal Kombat* reboot released in 2011? If the answer is yes, and you haven't played *Injustice: Gods Among Us*, you're doing yourself a disservice. Look beneath the surface and you'll discover that it's basically the same game. Both are made by NetherRealm Studio, both run in *Unreal Engine 3* and

both play very, very similarly. Sure, there are one or two new systems in *Injustice* such as the Clash mechanic, but it wouldn't be grossly unfair to call it *Mortal Kombat* with superheroes. If that isn't enough for you, *Injustice* includes *Mortal Kombat*'s Scorpion as one of the playable characters. Just get over here, already.



DOMINATE SOME FOOLS ONLINE

■ **IT'S ALL VERY** well smashing AI opponents in *Mortal Kombat*'s single-player, but you've got no right to brag about your skills unless you've been handing out the ass-whippings against real players online. Prepare for *Mortal Kombat X* by dusting off your fight stick and brushing up on your online skills. Helpfully, *Mortal Kombat* has got some in-built yardsticks by which to measure your badassery in the form of its trophies. Get the trophies 'Outstanding!' (Win 10 Ranked Online Matches in a row), 'Humiliation' (Get a Flawless Victory in an Online Match) and 'Throws Are For Champs' (Perform 8 throws in an Online Ranked Match) and you earn yourself the right to stand tall with your arms raised and loudly proclaim yourself a king in the arena of *Mortal Kombat*.

BLUFFER'S GUIDE

ARKHAM

WHAT IS IT?

■ **SUPERHEROES AND VIDEOGAMES** can potentially make for a truly awful combination and that has been the case with titles such as *X-Men: Destiny*. However, with *Batman: Arkham Asylum* and *Batman: Arkham City*, Rocksteady bucked that trend, making what are among the greatest superhero games of all time. Those games were followed by the Warner Bros. Montreal developed prequel, *Batman: Arkham Origins*, which didn't quite match the height of its predecessors, but was a very good game nonetheless. What makes the *Arkham* games so brilliant is that they perfectly capture the essence of their star, giving you the tools you need to feel like you are Batman. That's in part down to the games' aggressive brand of stealth, whereby you use Batman's grapple hook and cape to move swiftly above your enemies, swooping down from gargoyles as you take them out. *Arkham Asylum* is also responsible for creating a combat system that's been replicated countless times since the game's release in 2009. That simple system – one button to attack, one to counter, one to stun and one to dodge – relies on timing and creating a sense of flow that lends it a hypnotic satisfaction, even before it layers on levels of complexity.



THE STORY SO FAR

■ **THE EXCELLENT OPENING** of *Batman: Arkham Asylum* sees Batman overseeing The Joker's processing into Arkham Asylum after his capture. As it turns out, being captured was part of The Joker's plan, with Batman's nemesis taking control of the Asylum and setting its dangerous inmates loose. Batman discovers that The Joker's intention is to get his hands on the powerful Titan formula in order to build himself a superhuman army, eventually thwarting a pumped-up, Titan-fuelled Joker in the game's climax. In *Arkham City*, Batman has to deal with a dying Joker who has infected Batman with his terminal

disease in order to force him to find a cure, and Hugo Strange, the asylum's new director, who knows Batman's true identity and wants to implement the ominous sounding Protocol 10. Batman deduces that Protocol 10 is a plan to wipe out all of Arkham City's population and discovers that the real mastermind is Ra's al Ghul. Needless to say, Batman stops Ra's al Ghul and manages to cure himself. The third game, *Arkham Origins*, is a prequel to *Asylum*, telling the story of Batman's introduction to The Joker as he tries to survive Christmas Eve with a \$50 million bounty on his head.



WHERE TO START

■ **OPINION AS TO** which is the best *Arkham* game seems to be split about 50/50. Some prefer the open-world approach taken by *Arkham City*, arguing that the freedom to glide effortlessly throughout its world encapsulates the feeling of being Batman. Others (including us) argue that the more claustrophobic nature of *Arkham Asylum* better reflects the idea that Batman is trapped and under threat, lending it an

atmosphere that's lacking in the sequel. Nobody thinks that *Origins*, the only *Arkham* game not developed by Rocksteady, is the best, so don't make that your first *Arkham* experience. Our advice is that you may as well start with *Asylum*, given that it still holds up today. From there, you can progress onto *City* and *Origins* to prepare yourself for the release of the series' conclusion on 2 June, in *Batman: Arkham Knight*.

ANYTHING BESIDES GAMES?

■ **UNSURPRISINGLY, GIVEN THEIR** source material, the *Arkham* games have spawned a bunch of spin-off comics, including *Batman: Arkham Unhinged*, *Batman: Arkham City: End Game* and *Batman: Arkham Origins*. There is also an animated feature film called *Batman: Assault On Arkham* in which Batman takes on the villainous Suicide Squad, composed of Black Spider, Captain Boomerang, Deadshot, Harley Quinn, Killer Frost and King Shark.



ANY SPIN-OFFS?

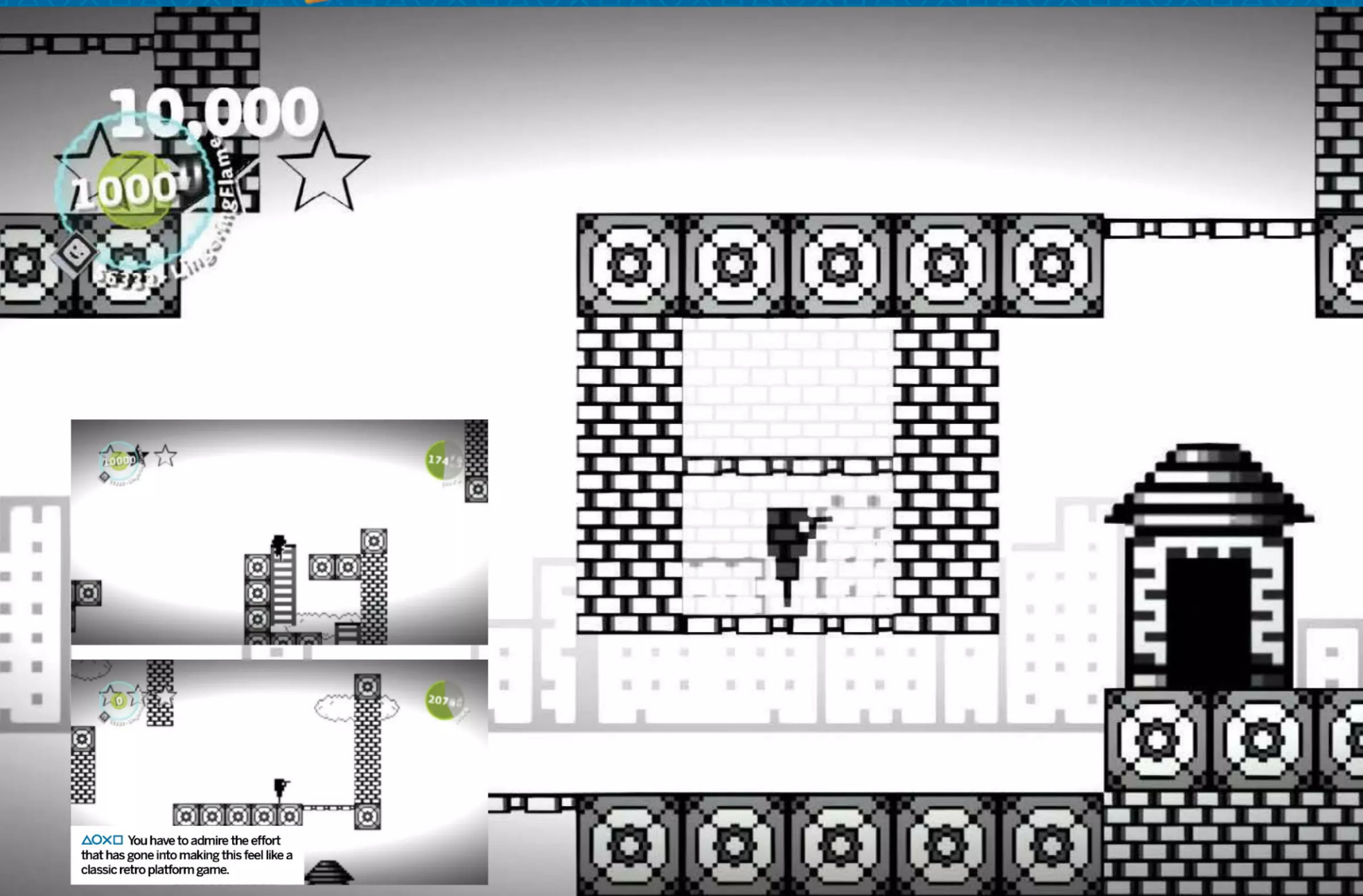
■ **THERE ARE A** couple of spin-off *Arkham* games that were released for mobile platforms – *Barman: Arkham City Lockdown*, released in 2011, and *Batman: Arkham Origins*, released in 2013, were both released to coincide with the main games they were based on. The best *Arkham* spin-off

game, however, has to be the Vita spin-off to *Arkham Origins*, *Batman: Arkham Origins Blackgate*. The game takes the core elements of the *Arkham* games – combat, stealth, detective work, exploration, and so on – and transports them into a 2.5D Metroidvania environment.

SO WHAT'S NEXT?



■ **BATMAN: ARKHAM KNIGHT** will be the final entry in the series, according to developer Rocksteady, so we're preparing for a suitably epic conclusion. The set-up for the game is that Scarecrow has forced the evacuation of Gotham by threatening to unleash his new fear toxin on its inhabitants. That leaves Batman alone in a city filled with criminals and super-villains like Penguin, Two-Face and Harley Quinn, who have united with the goal of taking Batman out. Then, of course, there is the mysterious Arkham Knight, who looks as if he will become the primary antagonist. Given those odds, it's fortunate that we're going to be given some new tools to employ in our fight against crime, the most notable of which, is the Batmobile. Indeed, it is the introduction of the Batmobile that Rocksteady is pushing as the game's primary innovation and, indeed, we are certainly imagining that speeding about Gotham's streets in a rocket-propelled supercar that can transform into a powerful tank is going to change the way we experience the *Arkham* games. Whether it'll change things for the better or worse remains to be seen, but if its introduction is handled with the panache Rocksteady has shown throughout its tenure as 'the Batman studio', then we will have absolutely nothing to worry about.



MASTERCLASS

LITTLEBIGPLANET 3

Many creators use LBP to emulate old platformers, but few manage to nail that retro feel quite like this little beauty...

TIME TAKEN TO MAKE: Two weeks **NUMBER OF PLAYS:** 23,346 **TIMES HEARTED:** 2,115

■ **PLATFORMERS ARE TEN-A-PENNY** in *LittleBigPlanet*, it is a platforming game, after all. And as much as anyone enjoys hopping around as Sackboy and friends, it's often the user-created levels that do something different with the tools that really impress. So even though this particular level, *Black And White*, is another platformer, it at least does something different with the tried and tested formula. As you'll no doubt have already noticed, instead of using *LBP*'s own visual style, this level's creator, dicebone-21, has created his own. That, in itself, is an impressive feat, since it requires hand-making everything from scratch rather than making use of other assets. The classic monochromatic Game Boy graphics obviously tick all the nostalgia boxes, but knowing that they've all been purpose-made makes it all the more amazing. Let's not forget that there's quite a bit of animation

going on: the waves of the water, for example, or when your player character moves. Sure it's only a two-tile animation system, but it is having to alternate one after the other all the same, which is not an easy task in a game not designed to handle custom animated sprites. The creator will have had to program that himself by using the Microchip tool.

The enhanced tools of the third *LittleBigPlanet* will have come in handy here, too. The new and improved Create options of *LittleBigPlanet 3* will have allowed for the custom-designed jumping, ladder-climbing and rope traversal. And yes, each of those do have their own retro animations, too. The work that will have gone into arranging everything is incredible, whether it's the bespoke buttons or respawn gates or the platforms that can be navigated by pressing down and jump. Let's remember that

LittleBigPlanet's use of layers means that such a function isn't possible through the game's own platforming mechanics, so even that will have to have been redesigned by the creator.

But what impresses most is just how detailed the level's graphics are, even with the 8-bit, monochrome visual style. One of Dicebone-21's earliest *LittleBigPlanet* stages was a recreation of *Super Mario Bros.* and while it might not be as compelling as the real thing (or this original equivalent), it's clear that helped him to understand the *right* way to create a true retro platformer. The simple graphics still manage to create an identity – in the very same way that games of the 8-bit era had to create iconic characters with such limited detail. A combination of the baseball cap-clad hero, the cityscape background and the chirpy user-created music creates an identity for this level that is all its own. So many

CREATOR CURATOR



We chat to the level's creator, dicebone-21, to find out how he built his own 2D platformer

You've made a lot of levels – did these give you the experience to make *Black And White*?

I have learned a lot from making 2D levels. For example recreating Mario, back in 2009, helped me better understand how Nintendo approached their level design. Second, with my levels *Courage The Cowardly Dog: Mysterious Adventure* and *Mech@nized*, I learned how to be more creative with the visual design of my levels. And finally, with *Fat Rick: The Rolling Journey*, I learned how to approach level design with gameplay first, then graphics second.

What tricks did you use in the creation of this retro-style 2D platformer?

One trick that really saves me time is creating a layout model. It's basically a square shape with a controlinator on it, and inside it there's a basic movement, jumping and animation logic. Usually, I just start with this layout model and then adjust it by adding new logic and tweaks. Another simple trick I like using is creating with the big grid scale, because it allows for organized placement and speed at the same time.

The level looks very different from traditional *LBP*, was it difficult to create this type of perspective?

No, it wasn't difficult to create this type of perspective because I already had an idea in my mind. What really helped me was just making a variety of sprites or pixel art that I could easily swap and see what looked better. I did encounter one problem with the perspective, trying to get the perfect speed of the background movement to make it feel believable. After a couple of tries, I got it.

What inspired you to create this type of level?

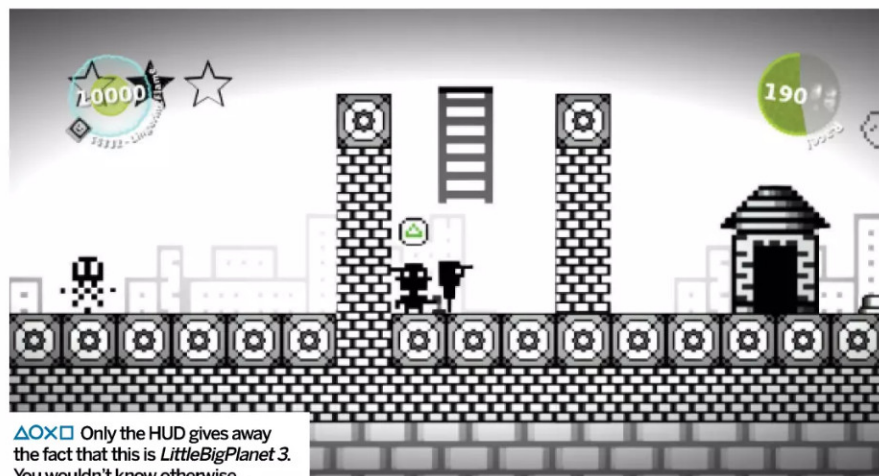
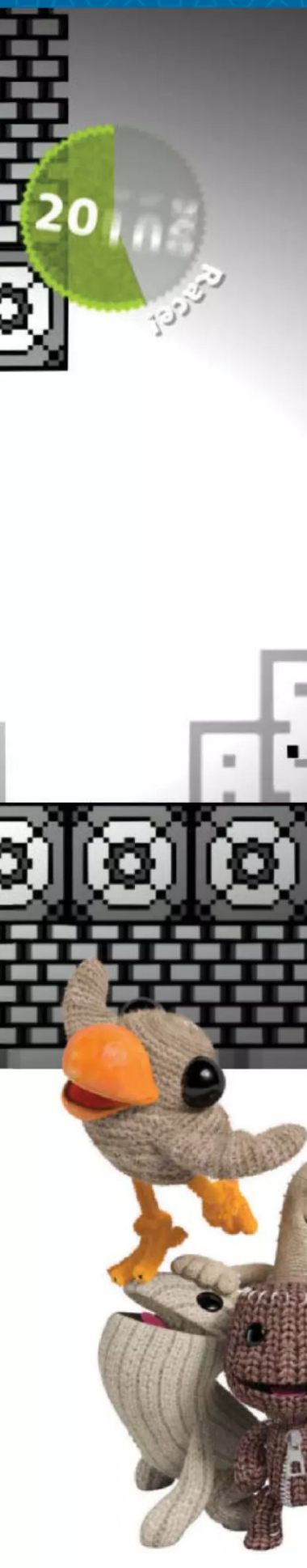
My levels are usually inspired by my childhood games like *Mario*, *Sonic*, and *Mega Man*. What I find useful is studying these games' approaches to figure out what made them so successful, and how I can apply it to my own levels. Besides my childhood games, I got inspiration from a level I played on *LBP Vita*, called *Dot Runner* by Orange217. The creator also used the black and white approach, and I liked it. So, I experimented with the idea and came up with my level.

What are your favorite levels created by other users in *LittleBigPlanet* so far?

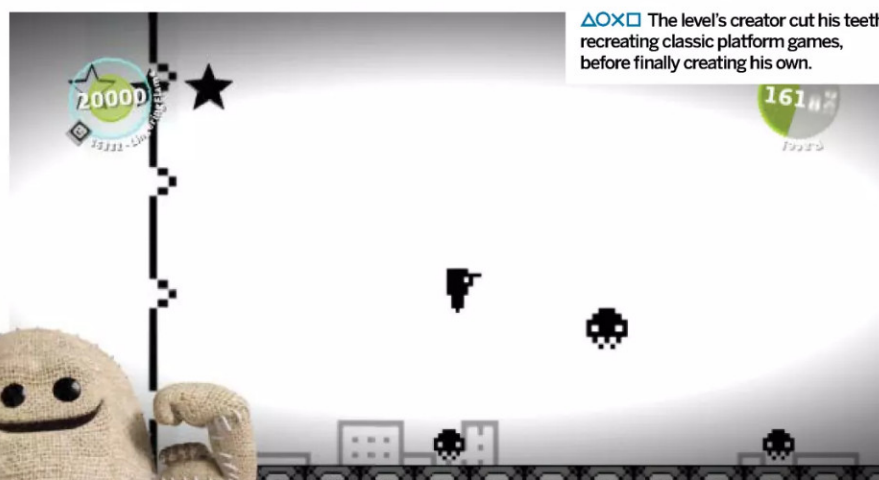
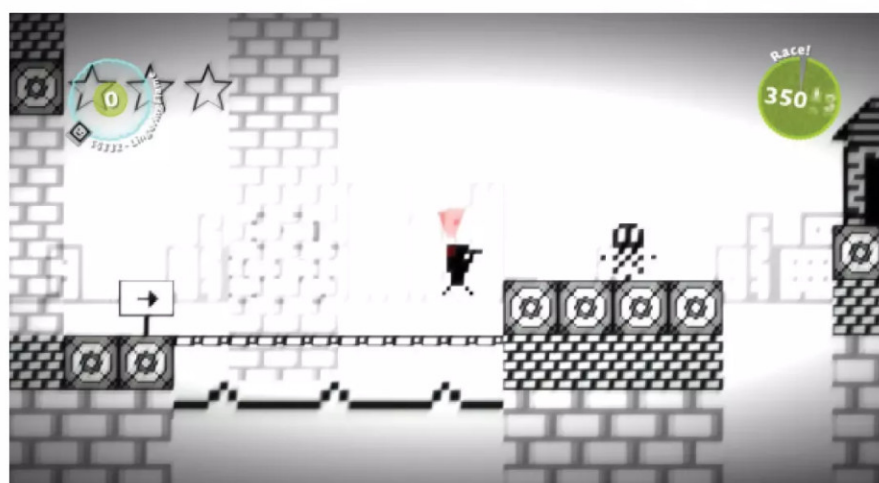
LBP has many great levels, but hands down one of my favorite levels is by c_mckamey called *InterKinetic*. This level was incredibly designed visually and mechanically, and it's just amazing. I also like any other level that is in 2D, because I enjoy playing them and seeing their approach to 2D games.

Do you have any more ideas for levels that you might want to work on next?

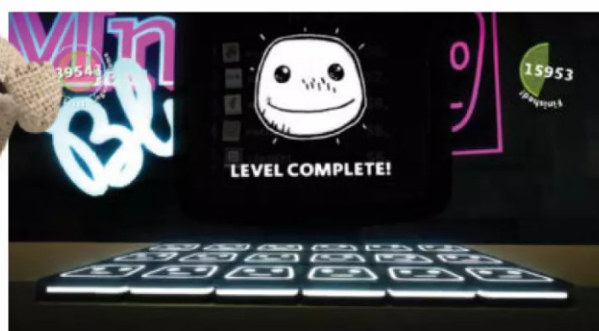
Yes, I was thinking about creating another 2D platformer level, but this time I would like to create using colours, something like you would find in *New Super Mario Bros*. I was also thinking about using the railing tool to make a 2D level with 3D in and out movement, to create interesting new gameplay. Currently, I have many ideas that I can use, I just have to start creating and I can't wait to get started.



△OX□ Only the HUD gives away the fact that this is *LittleBigPlanet 3*. You wouldn't know otherwise...



△OX□ The level's creator cut his teeth recreating classic platform games, before finally creating his own.



LittleBigPlanet levels are built out of the same materials and objects – as impressive as many of these levels may be, creating something with a unique personality is perhaps the hardest task when it comes to *LittleBigPlanet*.

It is worth mentioning the music, too. While Dicebone-21 has created his own music before, he has actually employed the services of another *LittleBigPlanet* creator, Whoacoder. His track "Boogie" deserves a special mention because where many user-created music is more reminiscent of binary

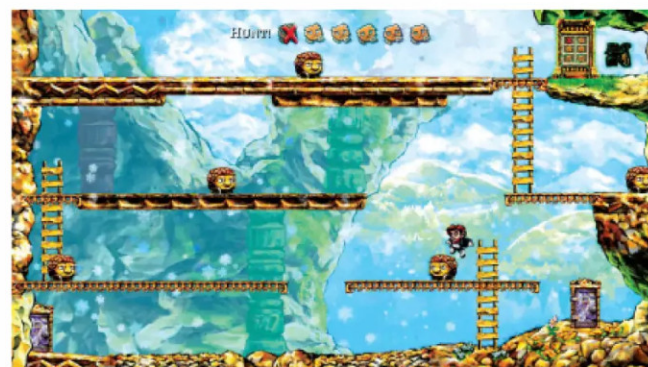
note-based chiptune, his song is much more varied and manages a melody more befitting of the upbeat, cool-guy attitude that this platformer exudes. And really, this is a case of a user's level being so much more than what it appears; here is a level that has been carefully considered from all possible angles, with each part finely-honed and hand-crafted to make something really special. While it might not be the best platforming stage you will play, any budding creator definitely has to respect the effort it took to make it.

HOW TO...

END A GAME

Some of the best games we have played left a lasting impression on us. Here's how an ending can do that...

■ **HOWEVER MUCH YOU'RE** enjoying something, you can still end up disappointed if the payoff isn't right. Whether the intention is to make you reflect on your experience or to challenge your skills, a great ending should be an exclamation point on everything a game is trying to achieve.



MAKE IT MATTER

■ **IT'S DIFFICULT TO** have a good ending if you don't put in the work to get us invested in what's happening. Take *Mass Effect 2* for example: building relationships with characters meant that when you were forced to make choices that decided their fate in the game's conclusion, it was far more significant. *Brothers* and *The Last Of Us* provide two more examples of games that made their endings feel important – the former with an inspired mechanical flourish that mirrors the game's events, the latter through wonderful character development.

TURN THE TABLES

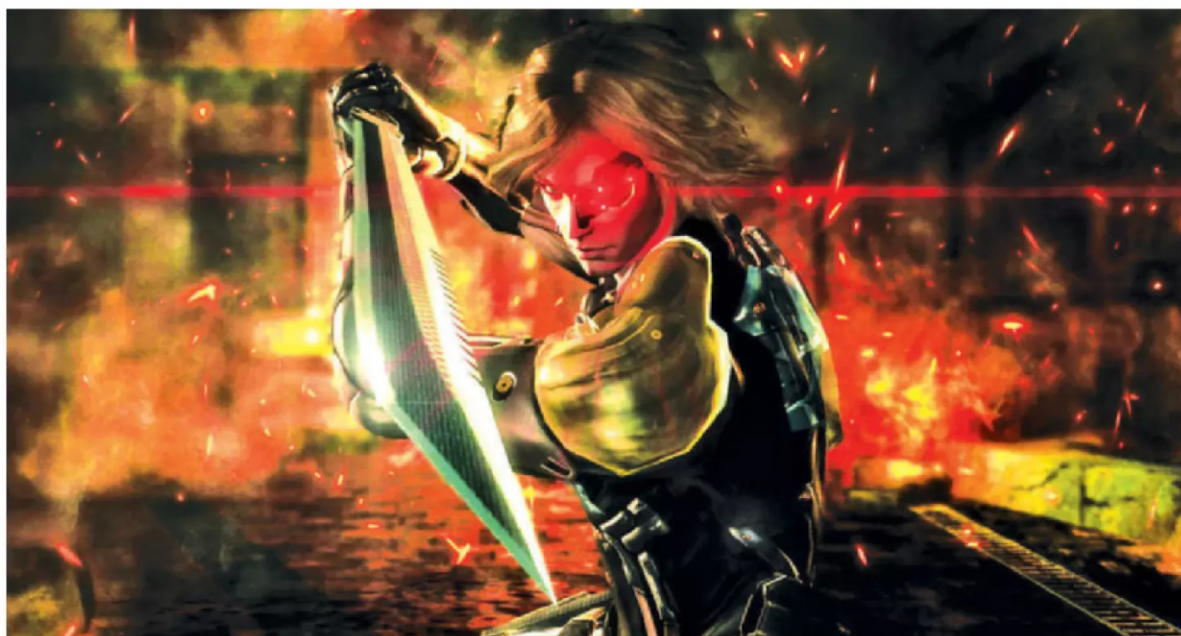
■ **CONCLUDING A GAME** by getting us to see everything that came before it in a new light isn't easy, but it damn sure is a fine way to end a game. We're going to try not to spoil anything for you, suffice to say that *Shadow Of The Colossus*, *Braid* and *Spec Ops: The Line* are prime examples of games with perspective shifting endings that make us realise that everything we've been doing in the game up to the end isn't quite what we thought it was.

AN EPIC BOSS

■ **SO MANY VIDEOGAMES** are about building to a conflict, often setting you up against a nemesis that you must overcome. One way to end a game well, then, is to simply make that final encounter live up to expectations. The fight with Liquid Ocelot in *MGS 4* (which enhances the end-of-an-era feel with a nostalgic soundtrack, and health bars that reflect the series' history) springs to mind. Then there are the fights which serve as the ultimate test of your skills – the fight with Vergil in *DMC3*, for example.

DO THE UNEXPECTED

■ **BEING ABLE TO** see something coming doesn't make for a good ending. Those games that can end with something that shocks or surprises us, then, often stand out in the mind. That's precisely what happened with *Red Dead Redemption* (beware: spoilers ahead!). Moving into the final stages of that game, having the protagonist killed and replaced by his son for the game's epilogue was something that we simply had not anticipated.



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THIEF

PLATFORM: PS3 DIFFICULTY: 5/5

TROPHIES: 38 1 5 8 24

■ **YOU'LL EASILY NAB 11 Bronze Trophies**, just for jaunting through the main game. If you want to start grabbing those shiny Gold ones though, you little tea-leaf, you're going to really have to channel your inner thief – getting through the game without a single kill or knockout will earn you a 'Moral Victory'. It's harder than it sounds; if you can complete the game once, you can set a custom difficulty, so set it to Master – that way, any combat will outright kill you, so you *have* to stick to the shadows. This will get you the Gold 'Something To Prove', and the Silver 'Hard Times' as a bonus, and the previous difficulty Trophies will stack, too. Turn off the Focus ability for this and you'll net 'Clear Headed' too. If you learn the routes of each level well enough first time round, you can pop this trophy in less than 20 hours. The challenge map trophies – 'Modesty Denied', for example – are *hard*, but if you focus on speed rather than stealth, you should *just about* make it to the end door with at least 2.4 million in score, and that's all you need.



ROGUE LEGACY

PLATFORM: PS4/PS3/VITA DIFFICULTY: 4/5

TROPHIES: 30 1 6 11 12

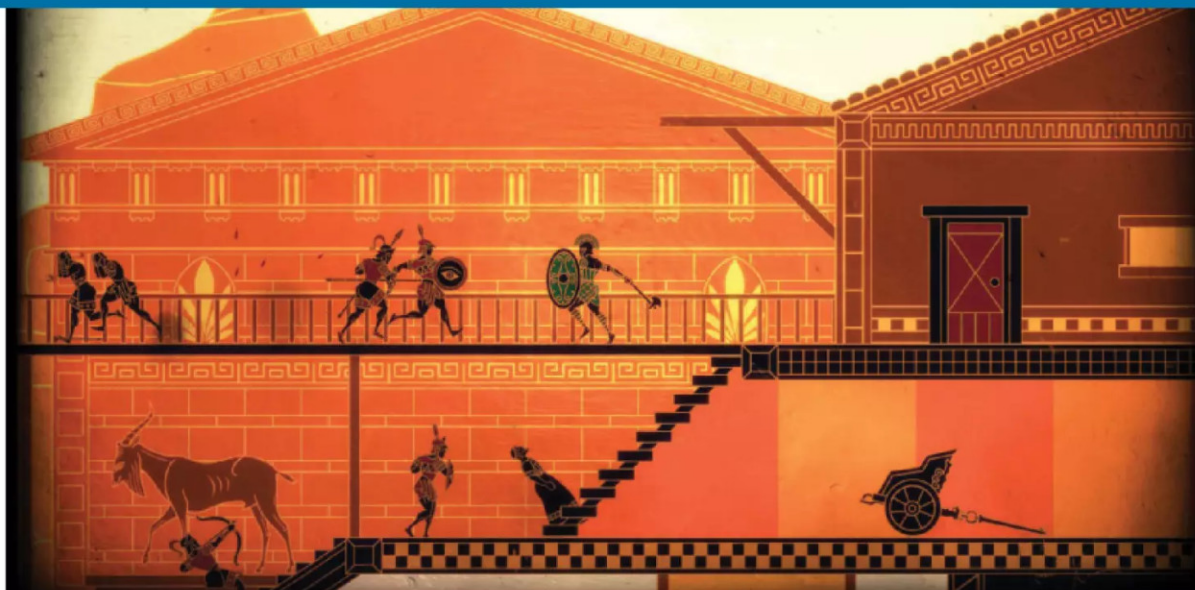
■ **ROGUE LEGACY IS** tough, there's no way around that. Luckily, a lot of the trophies actually revolve around simple progression (or not...) – die 20 times, open a chest, equip an item, beat a boss, earn a rune. You'll get over half the Trophies just from sauntering through the game at your own pace. It gets trickier when you're specifically gunning for the Gold, 'Mock The Traitor', requires you to defeat five Remix Bosses (and they are *evil*). This will give you a new class, though, and you'll get this trophy if you can make it to the final boss in this class. 'Thanatophobia' requires you to complete the game in less than 15 deaths, but you can back up a save file to the cloud at every save point, you can avoid the file getting over-written on death. Just quit the game, reload from the cloud (or a USB) and try again. Using this method, you can Platinum in about three playthroughs and 30 hours. Be careful of Zoophobia, as it can glitch: just go kill another boss after the five mini-bosses and it should pop, though.

APOTHEON

PLATFORM: PS4 DIFFICULTY: 1/5

TROPHIES: 31 1 4 18 8

■ **IT SHOULD BE** noted from the off that *Apotheon* is glitchy. Your first playthrough will net you seven Trophies, which is nice, and will kindly make you an autosave checkpoint before the final boss. Once you've finished him off, reload the game and you can go back from the top of Mount Olympus and get *every other trophy* apart from Olympian. Thanks to the game's Metroidvania style, all the trophies are obtainable at all times and none of them are too tricky, just see each description and work towards it. The Olympian trophy is tough, the difficulty modifier prevents health recharge, boosts enemy HP by 15%, increases their attack by 50% and makes them deal 50% more damage. There's a trick, though! Kill the final boss once, start a new game on Olympian difficulty, and overwrite your boss save (get the other trophies first). If you go into the menu as soon as you get control of your character and reload the *same* save, you'll be at the final boss, on Olympian difficulty. Finish him off (hide, strike and repeat) and you'll be basking in Platinum light.





TRANSISTOR

PLATFORM: PS4 **DIFFICULTY:** 1/5

TROPHIES: 34 🏆 1 🏆 4 🏆 12 🏆 17

■ **YOU'LL GRAB THE** vast majority of *Transistor* Trophies on the first playthrough, so sit back, enjoy the cool story and don't worry too much about missable stuff – you'll need to play the game at least twice anyway. Just make sure you upgrade every Function at least once, equip your Limiters whenever possible to fill out their respective information slots, and attempt any 'tests' that are unlocked (but these can be done in New Game+). Once you hit New Game+, just focus on leveling as much as possible, aiming for level 24. To help with this, equip whatever Limiters you can manage (each reduces combat effectiveness, but boosts experience gained) and you should hit level 24 – unlocking 'Risk' in the process – just before New Game+ is finished.

KICK & FENNICK

PLATFORM: VITA **DIFFICULTY:** 2/5

TROPHIES: 15 🏆 0 🏆 1 🏆 1 🏆 13

■ **THERE'S ONLY ONE** Trophy in here that's affected by difficulty – 'Kicking Butt' – so you might as well start up the game on Hard mode and complete it on that difficulty the first time. This will net you all but three Trophies – annoyingly, the only Gold one will still take some more work. 'The Diamond Collection' isn't hard – it's just really, really tedious. It requires you to collect a power node in each of the game's 43 levels; they're not hard to find, but some will require powered-up versions of your jump ability, so you might as well leave this until the very end of your playthrough when you can practically jump around the whole game without anything threatening you. Be warned; this Trophy alone will take about eight hours to get.



YAKUZA 4

PLATFORM: PS3 **DIFFICULTY:** 3/5

TROPHIES: 49 🏆 1 🏆 3 🏆 7 🏆 38

■ **FIRST UP, YOU'RE** going to want to finish the game on Normal – don't go straight into Hard mode otherwise you'll miss out on the Normal-only completion reward 'Indomitable' and create a 'Clear Save' – basically a free roam mode. Afterwards, you can either choose to jump back into Hard mode to grab the completion rewards for that (unlocking Ex-Hard in the process), or mop up the Ultimate Skill Trails in Normal – complete them all to net the secret 'Heir to the Ultimate', and a talisman that'll make all mini-games and sub-stories a lot easier to complete. Then you're going to want to tackle the remaining mini-games, and that'll take more time than the rest of the Trophies, purely because of the learning process involved with each game. Don't fret too much, though; because once you've finished *all* of the above, you're *still* going to have to complete the game on one remaining difficulty level to nab that final Trophy and the shiny Platinum that goes along with it. Expect it to take about 80 hours to get everything *Yakuza 4* has to offer.

INSTANT GAME
COLLECTION

DESTINY OF SPIRITS

How does a portable monster battler than you can play on your Vita sound? Well, it'll sound even better when you realise you can play it for free...



■ **TRY TO THINK** of *Destiny Of Spirits* as being a bit like *Pokémon* where, instead of collecting small odd creatures and forcing them to fight each other, you instead send mythical spirits and gods into battle. Unlike *Pokémon*, however, you don't roam an overworld looking for battles. Rather, *Destiny Of Spirits* is menu-based.

The focus of the game, then, is managing your creatures, working out how to combine them to create the strongest parties, and engaging in battles. You take three creatures into each encounter, with the battle system being a very simple time-based *Final Fantasy*-like one where each character has a bar beneath their character that you have to wait to charge before they attack. Your characters will attack automatically once the

bar fills, but you can tell them who to focus on, in order to take advantage of particular elemental weaknesses, for example. They will also periodically be able to cast special abilities to buff your party or deal large damage to your foes. You can be assisted by friend attacks and summon spirits by combining forces, adding a neat, yet mild passive multiplayer element to the game.

Being as this is a free-to-play game, there are some frustrations you're going to have to put up with if you don't want to fork out any money. Cash is, for example, a shortcut to having to wait for your character to regenerate health. Treat *Destiny Of Spirits* as a pick-up-and-play Vita game to be enjoyed in short bursts, though, and we don't see that as a problem.

CROSSOVER CHARACTERS

There are a whole bunch of Sony characters who have made an appearance in *Destiny Of Spirits*



KILLZONE

Perhaps the most un-*Destiny Of Spirits* crossover are the characters released for *Killzone's* tenth anniversary.



GRAVITY RUSH

As another Vita exclusive, it makes sense that *Gravity Rush's* protagonist Kat and friends made crossover appearances in the game.



SOUL SACRIFICE DELTA

A number of characters from the Vita exclusive *Soul Sacrifice Delta* made the transition over into *Destiny Of Spirits*.

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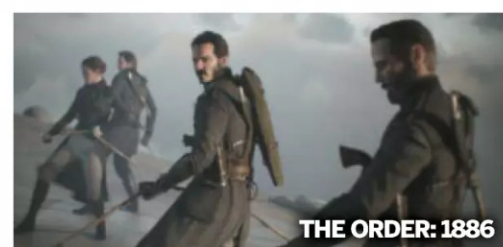


BREAKING DOWN THE PS4 beta

FINAL FANTASY TYPE-0 HD



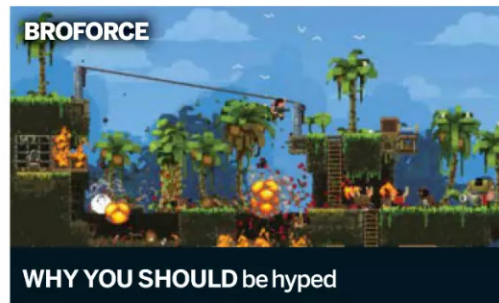
A WORTHY REMAKE?



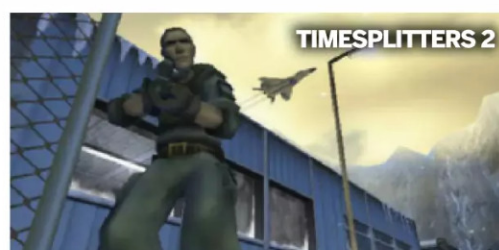
THE ORDER: 1886

OUR VERDICT ON the huge PS4 exclusive

BROFORCE



WHY YOU SHOULD be hyped



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REVISITING A PLAYSTATION classic

GRIM FANDANGO REMASTERED



EXAMINING THE CULT classic adventure



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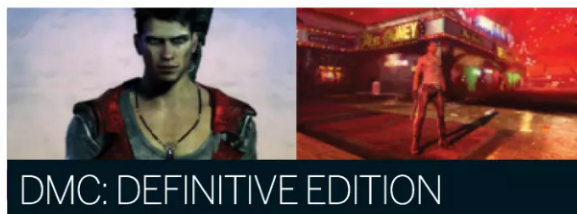
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Join the Play team for live streaming events and shared gameplay

TOURNAMENTS!

Keep an eye on our Facebook and Twitter channels for information on our Twitch tournaments, where you can play videogames with us for the world to watch!

The game changes each time, and the best players will win prizes – free games, or just some of the other tat that we found around our office. Come and join in the fun next time and maybe you could win something neat.



DMC: DEFINITIVE EDITION

Depending on which of us is playing, you're going to get to see how awesome, or rubbish we are at DmC. We will also be able to give you our thoughts on whether the definitive PS4 version is a worthwhile upgrade over the original.



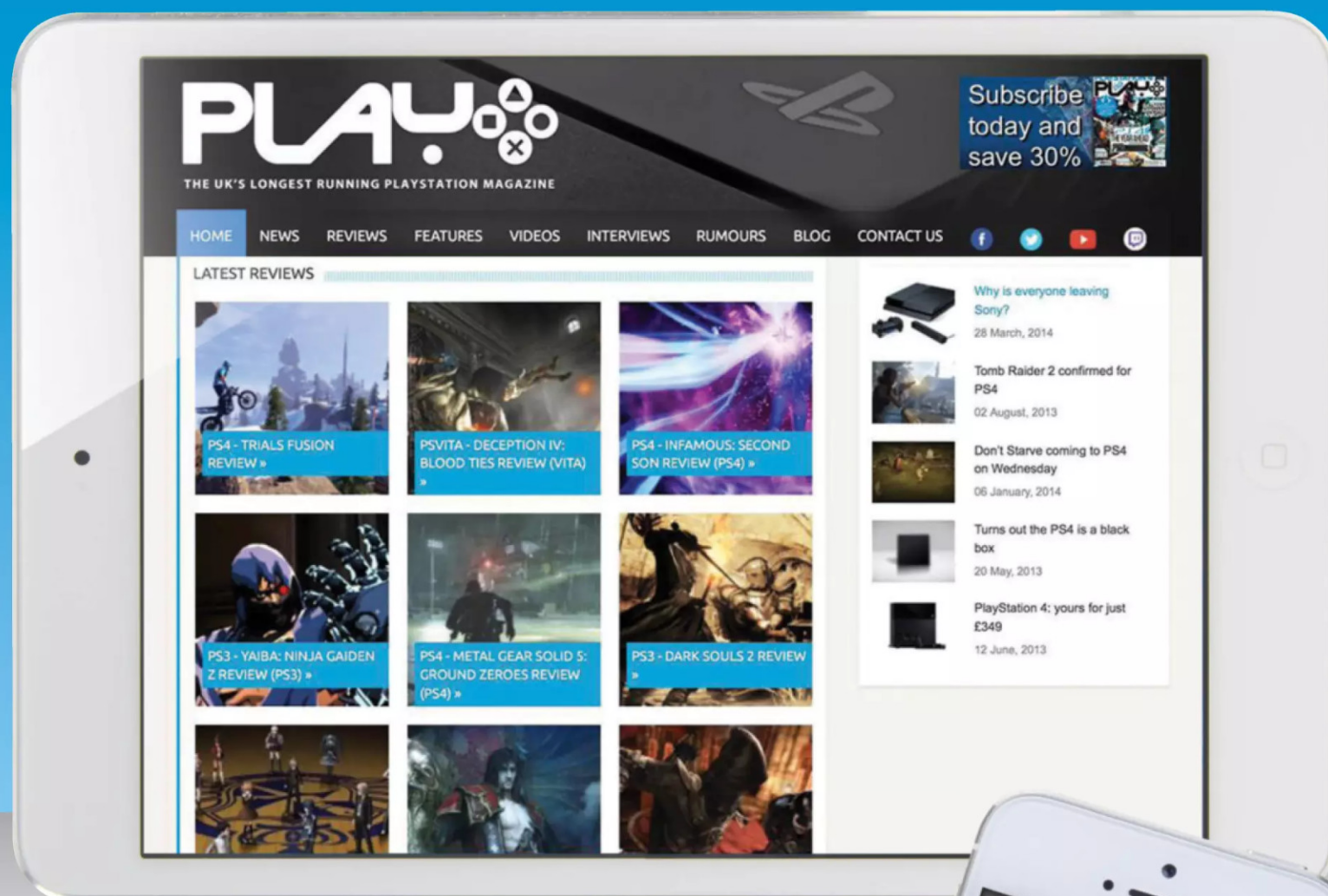
BATTLEFIELD HARDLINE

We're huge fans of Battlefield 4 (well, when it works), so we're eager to get stuck in with Hardline and see how Visceral's first Battlefield game matches up to the ones made by usual custodian's DICE. Come squad up with us.

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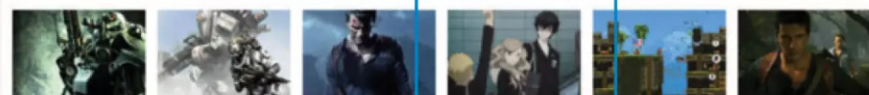
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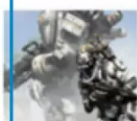
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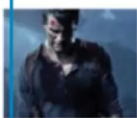
TITANFALL 2 ON PS4 WILL HAPPEN ACCORDING TO EA TEASE

Titanfall 2 on PS4 is sounding ever more likely after the latest comments on Titanfall from EA.



PS4 ONLINE MULTIPLAYER FREE WITHOUT PS PLUS THIS WEEKEND

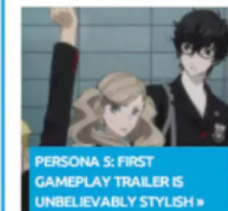
PS4 multiplayer will be free this weekend, even if you don't have PS Plus.



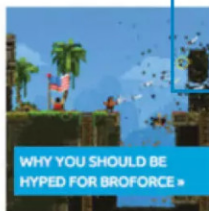
'UNCHARTED 4 WILL LOOK AS GOOD AS A FILM'

Naughty Dog's lead character artist has compared Uncharted 4's visual quality to that of a film, saying that Drake is...

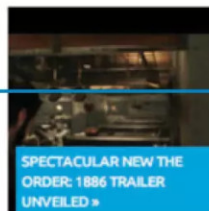
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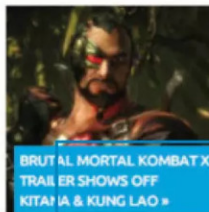
SPECTACULAR NEW THE ORDER: 1886 TRAILER UNVEILED



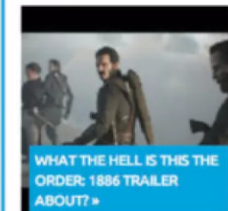
PROJECT CARS' NEW TRAILER IS MINDBLOWINGLY IMPRESSIVE



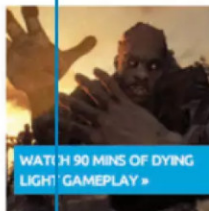
THIS NEW PS4 GAME WILL APPEAL TO PORTAL FANS



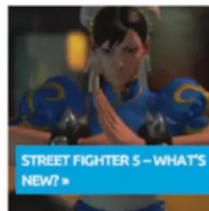
BRUTAL MORTAL KOMBAT X TRAILER SHOWS OFF KITAJI & KUNG LAO



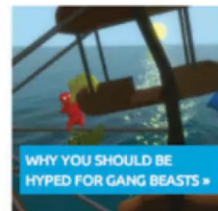
WHAT THE HELL IS THIS THE ORDER: 1886 TRAILER ABOUT?



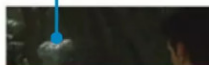
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Sorry Xbox One Owners, Titanfall 2 Will Probably Be On PS4 - nowgamer.com/sorry-xbox-one... pic.twitter.com/8imrF4pn4

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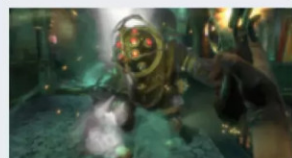
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TEAM PICKS GAMES WE NEVER BEAT



top five LUKE ALBIGÉS

- 1 The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim
- 2 Final Fantasy IX
- 3 Uncharted 3: Drake's Deception
- 4 Red Dead Redemption
- 5 BioShock Infinite



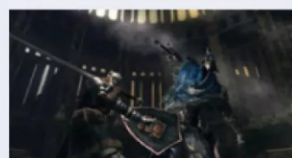
top five LIAM WARR

- 1 BioShock
- 2 Assassin's Creed II
- 3 Uncharted 3: Drake's Deception
- 4 Dark Souls
- 5 Minecraft



top five DREW SLEEP

- 1 Dishonored
- 2 Valkyria Chronicles
- 3 Minecraft
- 4 Dragon Age: Origins
- 5 Mirror's Edge



top five PAUL WALKER-EMIG

- 1 Dark Souls
- 2 Ico
- 3 Resident Evil 4
- 4 Final Fantasy X
- 5 Bayonetta

PS4 LISTING



GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Assassin's Creed IV: Black Flag	237	83%
Assassin's Creed: Unity	251	65%
Alien: Isolation	249	90%
Battlefield 4	238	80%
Bound By Flame	245	62%
Call Of Duty: Advanced Warfare	251	87%
Call Of Duty: Ghosts	238	75%
Child Of Light	244	79%
CounterSpy	248	50%
Daylight	245	20%
Dead Nation: Apocalypse Edition	242	74%
Destiny	249	85%
Destiny: The Dark Below	252	72%
Diablo III: Reaper Of Souls	248	92%
Disney Infinity 2.0	249	80%
Don't Starve	240	81%
Dragon Age: Inquisition	251	84%
Driveclub	250	77%
Dynasty Warriors 8 XLCE	243	80%
EA Sports UFC	246	75%
The Evil Within	250	84%
Far Cry 4	251	80%
Fez	243	95%
FIFA 15	249	85%
Final Fantasy XIV: A Realm Reborn	243	85%
Game Of Thrones: Iron From Ice	253	80%
Geometry Wars 3: Dimensions	252	92%
Grand Theft Auto V	251	97%
Guilty Gear Xrd -SIGN-*	253	93%
Hohokum	248	80%
inFamous: First Light	249	55%
inFamous: Second Son	242	86%
Killzone Shadow Fall	238	80%
Killzone Shadow Fall: Intercept	246	84%
Knack	238	55%
Lara Croft And The Temple Of Osiris	252	56%
Lego Batman 3: Beyond Gotham	252	68%
Lego Marvel Super Heroes	238	85%
Lego The Hobbit	244	65%
LittleBigPlanet 3	251	92%
Lords Of The Fallen	251	75%
Mercenary Kings	244	85%
Metal Gear Solid V: Ground Zeroes	242	85%
Middle-earth: Shadow Of Mordor	250	80%
Murdered: Soul Suspect	246	48%
NBA 2K15	250	84%
Need For Speed Rivals	238	83%
NHL 15	249	63%
Octodad: Dadliest Catch	244	60%
Outlast	241	73%
PES 2015	250	88%
Plants Vs Zombies: Garden Warfare	248	71%
Resident Evil	253	77%
Resogun	238	91%
An addictive and accomplished shoot-'em-up, Resogun is an indie delight and a surprise PS4 launch highlight. Awesome stuff.		
Resogun Heroes	247	93%
Rogue Legacy	248	91%
Skylanders Swap Force	238	77%
Skylanders Trap Team	250	79%
Sniper Elite III	246	72%
Switch Galaxy Ultra	253	81%
Tales From The Borderlands: Zer0 Sum	252	70%
Teslagrad	253	75%
The Amazing Spider-Man 2	245	25%
The Binding Of Isaac: Rebirth	251	90%
The Crew	252	52%
The Last Of Us Remastered	247	94%
Thief	241	70%
Tiny Brains	240	68%

GAME

ISSUE

SCORE

Transistor	245	87%
Transformers: Rise Of The Dark Spark	247	30%
Trials Fusion	244	80%
Valiant Hearts	247	64%
War Thunder	239	80%
Watch Dogs	245	80%
Warriors Orochi 3 Ultimate	249	62%
Wolfenstein: The New Order	245	78%
WWE 2K15	252	48%

PS3 LISTING



007 Legends	225	44%
2014 FIFA World Cup Brazil	244	69%
3D Dot Game Heroes	192	87%
50 Cent: Blood On The Sand	177	70%
Ace Combat: Assault Horizon	211	78%
The Adventures Of Tintin	212	58%
Afro Samurai	177	61%
After Burner Climax	193	91%
Agarest: Generations Of War	187	78%
Agarest: Generations Of War 2	223	43%
Agarest: Generations Of War Zero	209	52%
Age Of Booty	172	81%
Air Conflicts: Secret Wars	208	58%
Alice: Madness Returns	207	57%
Alien Breed: Impact	196	80%
Alien Breed 2: Assault	201	82%
Alien Breed 3: Descent	204	61%
Aliens: Colonial Marines	230	45%
Aliens Vs Predator	189	79%
All Zombies Must Die!	214	64%
Alone In The Dark	173	70%
Alpha Protocol	193	83%
Amy	215	19%
Anarchy: Rush Hour	194	73%
Ape Escape	208	55%
Aquapazza: Aquaplus Dream Match	239	70%
Aqua Panic	193	68%
Arcana Heart 3	207	79%
Armageddon Riders	207	65%
Armored Core: For Answer	173	65%
Armored Core 4	153	67%
Armored Core V	217	60%
Army Of Two	164	80%
Army Of Two: The 40th Day	188	65%
Army Of Two: The Devil's Cartel	231	44%
Assassin's Creed	161	58%
Assassin's Creed II	186	89%
Assassin's Creed III	225	78%
Assassin's Creed: Brotherhood	199	91%
Assassin's Creed: Revelations	212	75%
Assassin's Creed: Rogue	251	74%
Asura's Wrath	216	67%
Atelier Ayesha: The Alchemist Of Dust	230	60%
Atelier Rorona: The Alchemist Of Arland	198	77%
Backbreaker	193	70%
Back To The Future: It's About Time	204	71%
The Baconing	210	72%
Band Hero	187	68%
Batman: Arkham Asylum	183	85%
Batman: Arkham City	211	94%
Batman: Arkham Origins	237	85%
Battle Fantasia	176	67%
Battlefield 1943	182	89%
Battlefield: Bad Company	168	78%
Battlefield: Bad Company 2	190	93%
Battlefield 3	212	88%
Battleship	219	44%
Bayonetta*	187	93%
The Beatles: Rock Band	184	96%
Beat Hazard Ultra	213	79%
Beat Sketcher	201	85%
Beyond Good & Evil HD	207	86%
Beyond: Two Souls	236	70%

GAME

ISSUE

SCORE

Binary Domain	216	70%
Bionic Commando	179	82%
Bionic Commando Rearmed	169	88%
Bionic Commando Rearmed 2	203	61%
BioShock	172	93%
BioShock 2	189	88%
BioShock Infinite	230	97%
Birds Of Steel	217	55%
BlackSite	163	43%
Blade Kitten	197	72%
Bladestorm: The Hundred Years' War	160	58%
Blast Factor	152	72%
BlazBlue: Calamity Trigger	190	85%
BlazBlue: Continuum Shift	198	94%
Blazing Angels	151	54%
Bleach: Soul Resurrección	209	63%
Blitz: The League II	172	67%
Blokus	202	54%
BloodRayne: Betrayal	211	62%
Blur	193	86%
Bodycount	210	54%
Bomberman Ultra	185	82%
Borderlands	185	80%
Borderlands 2	223	90%
Borderlands: The Pre-Sequel	250	69%
The Bourne Conspiracy	168	72%
Braid	188	93%
Brink	206	67%
Brothers: A Tale Of Two Sons	233	83%
Brothers In Arms: Hell's Highway	171	75%
Brütal Legend	185	79%
Bulletstorm	203	86%
The Bureau: XCOM Declassified	235	57%
Burnout Crash	211	79%
Burnout Paradise	162	74%
Burn Zombie Burn	178	85%
Buzz! Quiz TV	168	82%
Buzz! Quiz World	185	70%
Calling All Cars	155	81%
Call Of Duty 3	151	77%
Call Of Duty: World At War	173	68%
Call Of Duty 4: Modern Warfare	160	88%
Call Of Duty: Modern Warfare 2	186	94%
Call Of Duty: Modern Warfare 3	212	88%
Call Of Duty: Black Ops	199	94%
Call Of Duty: Black Ops II	226	80%
Call Of Juarez: Bound In Blood	181	85%
Call Of Juarez: Gunslinger	232	80%
Call Of Juarez: The Cartel	208	30%
Captain America: Super Soldier	208	70%
Castle Crashers	200	88%
Castlevania: Harmony Of Despair	212	67%
Castlevania: Lords Of Shadow	197	85%
Castlevania: Lords Of Shadow 2	241	81%
Carnival Island	213	53%
Catan	195	85%
Cars 2	208	68%
The Cave	230	77%
Catherine	215	61%
Champion Jockey	210	50%
Chronicles Of Riddick: Assault On Dark Athena	178	87%
Child Of Eden	211	80%
Chime Super Deluxe	203	80%
Civilization Revolution	168	90%
Clash Of The Titans	193	65%
Clive Barker's Jericho	159	84%
The Club	163	80%
Colin McRae: DiRT	158	91%
Colin McRae: DiRT 2	184	87%
Command & Conquer: Red Alert 3	178	65%
Commander's Challenge	185	68%
Command & Conquer	175	44%
Comet Crash	186	84%
Comix Zone	210	62%
Conan	160	71%
Condemned 2	165	78%
Costume Quest	199	70%
Conflict: Denied Ops	164	50%


THIS MONTH'S NEW ENTRIES

The newest games, freshly
squeezed among all your
old favourites

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Counter Strike: Global Offensive	223	89%
Crash Commando	174	80%
Crash Time 4: The Syndicate	218	37%
Crazy Machines Elements	210	71%
Create	199	71%
Critter Crunch	188	91%
Cross Edge	182	59%
Crystal Defenders	184	48%
Crysis 2	204	72%
Crysis 3	230	61%
Cubixx HD	207	76%
The Cursed Crusade	211	40%
Damnation	181	38%
Damage Inc: Pacific Squadron WWII	223	37%
Dance Dance Revolution	201	52%
Dante's Inferno	189	80%
Dark Mist	164	53%
The Darkness	154	91%
The Darkness II	215	76%
Dark Sector	165	62%
Dark Souls	211	90%
Dark Souls II	242	90%
Darkstalkers Resurrection	230	82%
Dark Void	188	81%
Darksiders	188	83%
Darksiders II	221	86%
DC Universe Online	202	80%
de Blob 2	203	65%
Dead Or Alive 5	223	78%
Dead Island	210	79%
Dead Island: Riptide	231	65%
Dead Rising 2	197	78%
Dead Rising 2: Off The Record	211	61%
Dead Space	172	87%
Dead Space 2	201	92%
Dead Space 3	228	70%
Dead Space: Extraction	203	88%
Dead Space: Ignition	199	47%
Dead To Rights: Retribution	192	68%
Deadly Premonition: The Director's Cut	231	82%
Dead Nation	201	86%
Deadpool	233	60%
DeathSpank	195	83%
Def Jam: Icon	151	79%
Def Jam Rapstar	199	72%
Defiance	231	50%
Demon's Souls	193	92%
Destroy All Humans: Path Of The Furon	178	29%
Derrick The Deathfin	227	79%
Deus Ex: Human Revolution	209	91%
Devil May Cry 4	163	89%
Devil May Cry HD Collection	217	80%
Diablo III	235	89%
DiRT 3	206	85%
DiRT Showdown	219	84%
Disgaea 3: Absence Of Justice	175	81%
Dishonored	224	92%
Disney Infinity	235	81%
DJ Hero	186	91%
DJ Hero 2	198	88%
Doctor Who: The Eternity Clock	220	32%
Doom 3: BFG Edition	225	69%
Double Dragon Neon	224	37%
DmC Devil May Cry	227	93%
 DmC injects new life into one of the best genres in all of gaming, and does so with a style and confidence that elevates it beyond its roots.		
Dragon Age: Origins	186	82%
Dragon Age II	203	86%
Dragon Ball: Raging Blast	186	40%
Dragon Ball Z: Burst Limit	168	61%
Dragon's Crown	235	87%
Driver: San Francisco	209	68%
Droplitz	184	91%
Duke Nukem Forever	207	33%
D&D: Chronicles Of Mystara	233	80%
Dungeon Siege III	206	80%
Dust 514	233	51%

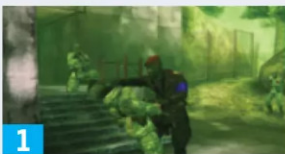



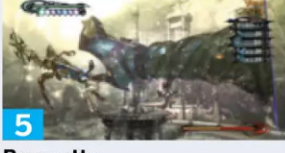



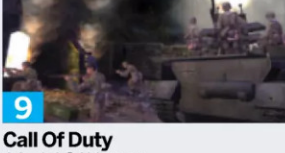

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Dynasty Warriors: Gundam 3	208	56%
Dynasty Warriors 6: Empires	181	44%
Dynasty Warriors 7: Empires	230	40%
Dynasty Warriors 8	234	71%
Earthworm Jim HD	196	89%
EA Sports Active 2	200	81%
EA Sports Grand Slam Tennis	215	75%
EA Sports MMA	198	89%
Eat Lead	178	38%
Eat Them!	202	60%
echochrome	169	85%
echochrome II	202	83%
EDF: Insect Armageddon	208	64%
The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion	152	91%
The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim	212	93%
Elefunk	170	45%
El Shaddai: Ascension Of The Metatron	208	77%
Enchanted Arms	152	69%
Enemy Territory: Quake Wars	168	60%
Enslaved: Odyssey To The West	197	83%
Epic Mickey 2: The Power Of Two	226	55%
Eternal Sonata	176	87%
Euforia	212	85%
Everybody's Golf 5	158	88%
Everybody's Golf: World Tour	165	91%
Explodemon	203	70%
Eye Of Judgment	159	65%
EyePet	185	83%
F1 2011	211	71%
F1 2012	223	79%
F1 Race Stars	226	61%
FaceBreaker	170	55%
Fairy Fencer F	250	43%
Fallout 3	173	97%
Fallout: New Vegas	198	88%
Family Guy: Back To The Multiverse	227	40%
Fantastic Four: Rise Of The Silver Surfer	155	39%
Far Cry 2	172	74%
Far Cry 3	226	88%
Far Cry 3: Blood Dragon	231	85%
Fat Princess	183	65%
Fatal Inertia EX	168	65%
FEAR	151	81%
FEAR 2: Project Origin	176	87%
FEAR 3	208	60%
FIFA 12	210	86%
FIFA 13	223	82%
FIFA 14	236	90%
FIFA Street (2012)	217	74%
Final Fight: Double Impact	193	90%
The Fight	199	42%
Fight Night Champion	203	88%
Fight Night Round 3	151	87%
Fight Night Round 4	181	84%
Final Fantasy XIV: A Realm Reborn	236	81%
Final Fantasy XIII	190	85%
Final Fantasy XIII-2	214	80%
Final Fantasy XIII: Lightning Returns	240	80%
Fist Of The North Star: Ken's Rage	198	51%
Fist Of The North Star: Ken's Rage 2	230	58%
Flight Control HD	198	85%
Flock!	179	70%
Folklore	158	66%
Front Mission Evolved	198	52%
Frogger: Hyper Arcade Edition	221	55%
From Dust	211	82%
Fuel	180	49%
Full Auto 2: Battlegrounds	151	69%
Fuse	232	73%
Game Of Thrones	220	39%
Gatling Gears	207	62%
Genji: Days Of The Blade	151	38%
Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter 2	157	83%
Ghost Recon Future Soldier	219	60%
Ghostbusters: The Videogame	180	80%
Gl Joe	183	22%
The Godfather	151	37%
The Godfather II	178	38%

Guilty Gear Xrd -SIGN-*	93%
Saints Row: Gat Out Of Hell	65%
Resident Evil	77%
Teslagrad	75%
Game Of Thrones: Iron From Ice	80%
Switch Galaxy Ultra	81%

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
God Of War III	190	88%
God Of War: Ascension	230	90%
God Of War Collection*	188	93%
God Of War Collection: Volume II	210	70%
The Golden Compass	162	32%
GoldenEye 007: Reloaded	213	63%
Gotham City Imposters	216	78%
Gran Turismo 5	200	85%
Gran Turismo 6	239	83%
Grand Theft Auto IV	166	98%
Grand Theft Auto V	236	97%
 Rockstar's latest is a masterpiece: the perfect swansong for the generation and a wonderful addition to the franchise.		
Greed Corp	191	75%
Green Day: Rock Band	194	77%
Grid 2	232	79%
Grid Autosport	246	67%
GTI Club+	174	72%
GTA: Episodes From Liberty City	191	94%
Guardians Of Middle-earth	227	71%
Guitar Hero III	160	90%
Guitar Hero 5	184	81%
Guitar Hero: Aerosmith	168	63%
Guitar Hero Greatest Hits	182	76%
Guitar Hero Metallica	179	88%
Guitar Hero: Van Halen	189	65%
Guitar Hero: Warriors Of Rock	197	71%
Guitar Hero World Tour	173	95%
Gundemonium Collection	197	80%
Gunstar Heroes	181	85%
Hamsterball	194	72%
Harry Potter And The Half-Blood Prince	182	60%
Harry Potter And The Order Of The Phoenix	155	32%
Haze	167	64%
Heavenly Sword	157	71%
Heavy Rain	189	94%
Heavy Weapon	187	75%
Heroes Over Europe	184	48%
Hitman: Absolution	225	93%
Hitman HD Trilogy	230	75%
Homefront	203	69%
The House Of The Dead 4	218	82%
The House Of The Dead: Overkill	212	75%
Hunted: The Demon's Forge	207	59%
Hustle Kings	190	87%
Hyperdimension Neptunia	202	21%
I Am Alive	217	64%
Ico & Shadow Of The Colossus HD	210	94%
IL-2 Sturmovik: Birds Of Prey	183	72%
The Incredible Hulk	168	52%
inFamous	180	81%
inFamous 2	207	83%
Inferno Pool	181	81%
Injustice: Gods Among Us	231	80%
Inversion	220	49%
Iron Man	166	58%
Iron Man 2	193	50%
The Jak And Daxter Trilogy	216	82%
Jak And Daxter: The Lost Frontier	187	59%
James Bond 007: Blood Stone	199	63%
James Cameron's Avatar: The Game	187	64%
JoJo's Bizarre Adventure: All Star Battle	244	80%
Journey	216	87%
Juiced 2: Hot Import Nights	159	78%
Jurassic Park: The Game	194	60%
Just Cause 2	190	87%
Kane & Lynch: Dead Men	160	73%
Kane & Lynch 2: Dog Days	196	71%
Katamari Forever	184	88%
Kick-Ass The Game	194	60%
Killer Is Dead	235	75%
Killzone HD	225	65%
Killzone 2	176	93%
Killzone 3	202	80%
Kingdom Hearts HD 1.5 ReMIX	236	80%
Kingdom Hearts 2.5 HD ReMIX	252	88%
Kingdoms Of Amalur: Reckoning	215	70%

*denotes import review

TOP TEN SPIRITUAL SEQUELS

- 
1
Dishonored
Thief
- 
2
BioShock
System Shock 2
- 
3
Rock Band
Guitar Hero
- 
4
Demon's Souls
King's Field
- 
5
Bayonetta
Devil May Cry
- 
6
Jak And Daxter
Crash Bandicoot
- 
7
Serious Sam
Duke Nukem 3D
- 
8
Mighty No. 9
Mega Man
- 
9
Call Of Duty
Medal Of Honor
- 
10
Toybox Turbos
Micro Machines

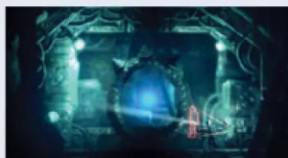
PLAY'S BEST GAMES IF YOU LOVE...



MASSEFFECT

PLAY: DRAGON AGE: INQUISITION

If you're a fan of *Mass Effect* and want more of BioWare's brand of choice-heavy RPG, *Dragon Age: Inquisition* is the game for you, providing you can stomach the switch from sci-fi to fantasy.



CLONING

PLAY: THE SWAPPER

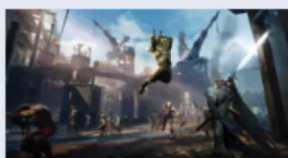
Puzzles in *The Swapper* are based around a brilliant concept: you are able to create and switch between up to four clones of yourself who mirror your movements. As well as being a great puzzler, the game's got a great story, too.



PARKOUR

PLAY: MIRROR'S EDGE

Years after its release, the parkour-focused gameplay of *Mirror's Edge* means it still stands out from its first-person peers. We can't wait for the reboot to come to PS4.



MANIPULATION

PLAY: MIDDLE-EARTH: SHADOW OF MORDOR

As well as pinching mechanics from other games, *Shadow Of Mordor* implements a brilliant idea of its own. We love manipulating the orc hierarchy and imposing our will upon it.



KICKFLIPS

PLAY: SKATE 3

Until the new *Tony Hawk's* game – which is being teased by the man himself – comes out for PS4 later on this year, you skateboarders fans are going to have to settle with *Skate 3* to get your kickflip fix.

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
The King Of Fighters XII	182	82%
The King Of Fighters XIII	213	76%
Knights Contract	202	53%
Kung Fu Panda 2	207	20%
Kung Fu Rider	196	65%
Lair	158	52%
Landit Bandit	195	66%
LA Noire	206	91%
Lara Croft And The Guardian Of Light	198	90%
The Last Guy	171	91%
Last Rebellion	191	42%
Lead And Gold: Gangs Of The Wild West	193	65%
Legend Of Spyro: Dawn Of The Dragon	174	54%
Legendary	173	62%
Lego Batman	173	65%
Lego Batman 2	221	80%
Lego Harry Potter: Years 1-4	194	79%
Lego Harry Potter: Years 5-7	213	67%
Lego Indiana Jones: The Original Adventures	167	73%
Lego Indiana Jones 2: The Adventure Continues	187	71%
Lego Pirates Of The Caribbean	206	76%
Lego Rock Band	187	75%
Lego Star Wars: The Complete Saga	160	76%
Lego Star Wars III: The Clone Wars	204	79%
Lego: The Lord Of The Rings	227	85%
Leisure Suit Larry: Box Office Bust	180	24%
Limbo	209	90%
LittleBigPlanet	172	94%
LittleBigPlanet 2	201	96%
LittleBigPlanet: Karting	225	85%
LocoRoco Cocoreccho!	159	80%
Lollipop Chainsaw	221	72%
London 2012	221	45%
The Lord Of The Rings: Aragorn's Quest	199	60%
The Lord Of The Rings: Conquest	175	52%
The Lord Of The Rings: War In The North	213	42%
Lost Planet 2	192	75%
Lost Planet 3	236	58%
Lost Planet: Extreme Condition	163	69%
Lumines Supernova	178	90%
Madagascar 3	224	39%
Madden NFL 12	209	85%
Madden NFL 13	223	86%
Madden NFL Arcade	188	58%
Mad Riders	220	70%
Mafia II	196	81%
MAG	189	68%
Magic: Duels Of The Planeswalker	202	84%
Magic: Duels Of The Planeswalker 2012	208	70%
Majin And The Forsaken Kingdom	199	72%
Marvel Vs Capcom 2	182	90%
Marvel Vs Capcom 3	202	88%
Marvel Ultimate Alliance	151	64%
Marvel Ultimate Alliance 2	185	57%
Max Payne 3	219	77%
Mass Effect 2	201	97%
Mass Effect 3	216	93%
Medal Of Honor	198	86%
Medal Of Honor Airborne	161	85%
Medal Of Honor: Warfighter	225	72%
Mega Man 9	172	75%
Mega Man 10	192	82%
Mercenaries 2: World In Flames	171	78%
Metal Gear Rising: Revengeance	228	91%
<i>Metal Gear Rising: Revengeance</i> is another world-class entry in gaming's most fundamentally playable genre.		
Metal Gear Solid 4	167	92%
Metal Gear Solid HD Collection	214	91%
Metro: Last Light	231	60%
Michael Jackson: The Experience	205	58%
Microbot	202	51%
Midnight Club: Los Angeles	173	84%
Mindjack	202	38%
Minecraft	240	93%
Mini Ninjas	184	80%
Mirror's Edge	173	71%
MLB: The Show 14	245	90%
ModNation Racers	192	90%
Monkey Island 2: Special Edition	195	94%
Mortal Kombat	205	81%
Mortal Kombat Vs DC Universe	173	68%
MotoGP 13	233	74%
Motorhead	173	60%
MotorStorm	151	92%
MotorStorm: Apocalypse	203	76%
MotorStorm: Pacific Rift	172	93%

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Mud: FIM Motocross Championship	217	50%
MX Vs ATV Alive	206	42%
MX Vs ATV Reflex	189	68%
MX Vs ATV Untamed	164	58%
naï'd	201	61%
Namco Museum Essentials	193	60%
Naruto: Ultimate Ninja Storm	174	59%
Naruto Shippuden: UNS Generations	217	53%
Naruto Shippuden: UNS 3	230	85%
Naughty Bear	195	64%
NBA 2K12	211	88%
NBA 2K13	224	88%
NBA Jam	200	68%
NBA Street: Homecourt	151	68%
Need For Speed Carbon	151	76%
Need For Speed: Hot Pursuit	199	91%
Need For Speed: Most Wanted	225	95%
<i>Need For Speed: Most Wanted</i> is easily the best arcade racer of this generation. We absolutely love it.		
Need For Speed ProStreet	161	86%
Need For Speed Shift	184	81%
Need For Speed: The Run	213	63%
Need For Speed Undercover	173	75%
NeedDead	215	39%
Nier	192	54%
Ni No Kuni: Wrath Of The White Witch	227	85%
NHL 12	210	78%
NHL 13	223	74%
NIGHTS Into Dreams...	224	75%
Ninja Gaiden Sigma	154	88%
Ninja Gaiden Sigma 2	184	82%
Ninja Gaiden 3	217	63%
Ninja Gaiden 3: Razor's Edge	231	80%
Noby Noby Boy	177	85%
No More Heroes: Heroes' Paradise	206	89%
Nucleus	155	82%
Okami HD	225	90%
One Piece: Pirate Warriors	224	69%
Operation Flashpoint: Dragon Rising	185	78%
Operation Flashpoint: Red River	205	75%
The Orange Box	161	93%
Outland	207	72%
OutRun Online Arcade	180	80%
Overlord II	181	68%
Pac-Man Championship Edition DX	201	91%
Pain	183	69%
Payday: The Heist	213	88%
Payday 2	235	79%
Peggle	189	94%
Persona 4 Arena	231	91%
<i>Essential for both Persona fans and fighting game enthusiasts, Persona 4 Arena is an absolute joy to play.</i>		
Persona 4 Arena Ultimax	250	92%
PES 2012	210	74%
PixelJunk 4am	220	40%
PixelJunk Eden	169	67%
PixelJunk Shooter	187	93%
PixelJunk Shooter 2	204	90%
PixelJunk SideScroller	213	77%
PixelJunk Racers	160	74%
Planet Minigolf	196	58%
PlayStation All-Stars Battle Royale	225	80%
PlayStation Move Heroes	204	54%
Poker Night 2	232	55%
Port Royale 3: Pirates & Merchants	224	54%
Portal 2	205	95%
Prince Of Persia	174	83%
Prince Of Persia: Classic	173	67%
Prince Of Persia: The Forgotten Sands	193	68%
Prince Of Persia Trilogy	200	88%
Prison Break: The Conspiracy	191	40%
Prototype	181	76%
Prototype 2	219	75%
Puddle	216	76%
The Punisher: No Mercy	182	49%
Puppeteer	236	70%
Pure	171	80%
Puzzle Chronicles	194	70%
Puzzle Dimensions	208	81%
Puzzle Quest Galactrix	181	68%
Quantum Conundrum	221	90%
Quantum Of Solace	175	57%
Quantum Theory	197	29%
Race Driver: GRID	167	85%
Ratchet & Clank: Q-Force	227	52%

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Rag Doll Kung-Fu: Fists Of Plastic	179	83%
Rage	211	60%
Rainbow Moon	221	68%
Rainbow Six Vegas	155	88%
Rainbow Six Vegas 2	164	78%
Rango	203	54%
Ratchet & Clank: A Crack In Time	186	82%
Ratchet & Clank: All 4 One	211	68%
Ratchet & Clank: Tools Of Destruction	160	72%
Ratchet & Clank Trilogy HD	221	88%
Rayman Legends	235	83%
Rayman Origins	212	80%
Red Dead Redemption	193	92%
Red Faction: Armageddon	207	62%
Red Faction: Guerrilla	180	80%
Remember Me	232	61%
Renegade Ops	211	78%
Resident Evil Chronicles HD Collection	221	82%
Resident Evil Code Veronica X	211	72%
Resident Evil: Operation Raccoon City	217	33%
Resident Evil: Revelations HD	232	71%
Resident Evil 4 HD	210	93%
Resident Evil 5	177	86%
Resident Evil 6	223	88%
Resistance: Fall Of Man	151	83%
Resistance 2	173	90%
Resistance 3	210	88%
Resonance Of Fate	191	79%
Retro City Rampage	228	78%
Ridge Racer 7	151	75%
Ridge Racer Unbounded	217	67%
Riff: Everyday Shooter	162	86%
Rise Of The Argonauts	176	58%
Risen 2: Dark Waters	222	58%
Risen 3: Titan Lords	248	25%
Risk: Factions	202	80%
Rock Band Blitz	223	80%
Rock Band	169	94%
Rock Band 2	179	96%
Rock Band 3	199	84%
Rocksmit	223	78%
Rogue Warrior	188	09%
Rugby World Cup 2011	209	49%
Rune Factory Oceans	220	51%
RUSE	197	82%
The Saboteur	187	67%
Sacred 2: Fallen Angel	180	76%
Sacred 3	247	60%
Saints Row 2	172	79%
Saints Row: The Third	211	88%
Saints Row IV: Gat Out Of Hell	253	65%
SBK Generations	220	51%
Saint Seiya: Sanctuary Battle	216	52%
Sam & Max: The Devil's Playground Ep1	194	90%
Sam & Max: The Devil's Playground Ep2	194	92%
Savage Moon	175	87%
Saw	186	52%
Saw II: Flesh & Blood	198	36%
Scott Pilgrim Vs The World	197	77%
The Secret Of Monkey Island SE	195	92%
Sega Rally Online Arcade	208	74%
Sega Mega Drive Ultimate Collection	177	85%
Section 8: Prejudice	209	80%
SBK 2011	206	70%
SBK Generations	220	54%
SBK X: Superbike World Championship	193	67%
Sega Rally	158	92%
Sengoku Basara: Samurai Heroes	198	76%
Shadows Of The Damned	207	79%
Shank	197	86%
Shatter	183	91%
Shaun White Skateboarding	198	70%
Shaun White Snowboarding	173	72%
Shellshock 2: Blood Trails	177	32%
Shift 2: Unleashed	204	66%
The Shoot	199	76%
Shoot Many Robots	217	81%
Silent Hill: Downpour	217	81%
Silent Hill HD Collection	217	76%
Silent Hill: Homecoming	174	64%
The Simpsons Arcade Game	216	54%
The Simpsons Game	160	82%
The Sims 3	199	87%
The Sims 3: Pets	212	70%
SingStar	159	80%
Singularity	195	80%
Siren Blood Curse	170	62%

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Skate	159	86%
Skate 2	175	82%
Skate 3	192	86%
Skullgirls	218	88%
Sleeping Dogs	222	80%
The Sly Collection	200	84%
Sly Cooper: Thieves In Time	230	60%
Sniper Elite V2	218	52%
Sniper: Ghost Warrior	206	45%
Sniper: Ghost Warrior 2	230	55%
SOCOM: Special Forces	205	63%
Sonic Adventure	198	63%
Sonic Adventure 2	225	69%
Sonic CD	214	82%
Sonic The Hedgehog 4: Episode 1	199	82%
Sonic The Hedgehog 4: Episode 2	225	40%
Sonic & Sega All-Stars Racing	190	78%
Sonic & All-Stars Racing Transformed	227	88%
Sonic Generations	212	70%
Sonic The Hedgehog	151	52%
Sonic Unleashed	175	48%
Sorcery	219	76%
SoulCalibur IV	169	94%
SoulCalibur V	214	80%
South Park: The Stick of Truth	242	81%
Spec Ops: The Line	220	59%
Spider-Man 3	155	33%
Spider-Man: Edge Of Time	212	38%
Spider-Man: Shattered Dimensions	197	69%
Spider-Man: Web Of Shadows	173	55%
Spin Jam	174	32%
Splatterhouse	200	58%
Splinter Cell Double Agent	153	79%
Split/Second: Velocity	192	90%
Sports Champions	196	83%
Sports Champions 2	225	65%
SSX	216	45%
Stacking	203	88%
Starhawk	219	81%
Star Ocean: The Last Hope International	190	63%
Star Trek	231	52%
Star Trek: D-A-C	189	57%
Star Wars: The Force Unleashed	171	65%
Star Wars: The Force Unleashed II	199	61%
Star Wars: Pinball	230	79%
Start The Party!	196	72%
Stormrise	178	51%
Stranglehold	159	65%
Street Fighter III: 3rd Strike Online Edition	209	92%
Street Fighter IV	176	95%
Street Fighter X Tekken	217	83%
Strength Of The Sword 3	234	81%
Strider	242	62%
Super Puzzle Fighter II HD Turbo Remix	168	78%
Super Rub-A-Dub	151	83%
Super Street Fighter IV: Arcade Edition	207	88%
Stuntman: Ignition	157	82%
Super Stardust HD	155	74%
Superstars V8: Next Challenge	190	55%
Superstars V8 Racing	181	63%
Super Street Fighter II Turbo HD Remix	176	72%
Super Street Fighter IV	191	90%
Supremacy MMA	211	40%
Switchball	191	75%
Swords And Soldiers	199	88%
Syndicate	216	78%
Tales Of Graces f	222	77%
Tales Of Monkey Island	196	91%
Tales Of Xillia	234	70%
Tales Of Xillia 2	249	71%
Tekken 5: Dark Resurrection Online	161	87%
Tekken 6	184	94%
Tekken Tag Tournament 2	223	90%
Test Drive Ferrari Racing Legends	221	60%
Tetris	202	84%
Test Drive Unlimited 2	203	62%
The Amazing Spider-Man	221	61%
The Last Of Us	233	94%
When <i>The Last Of Us</i> is good (winter), it's better than anything else this gen – we do not say that lightly.		
The Last Of Us: Left Behind	242	81%
The Testament Of Sherlock Holmes	224	55%
The Walking Dead	231	92%
The Walking Dead: Survival Instinct	231	20%
Thor: God Of Thunder	206	38%
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 14	231	61%

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Time Crisis 4	166	69%
Time Crisis: Razing Storm	199	58%
TimeShift	162	72%
TMNT: Turtles In Time-Re-shelled	186	57%
TNA Impact!	171	71%
Tokyo Jungle	223	81%
Tom Clancy's EndWar	173	80%
Tom Clancy's HAWX	177	75%
Tom Clancy's HAWX 2	196	69%
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell Blacklist	235	71%
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell Trilogy HD	210	78%
Tomb Raider	229	90%
Tomb Raider Trilogy	204	86%
Tomb Raider: Underworld	173	83%
Tony Hawk's Project 8	151	85%
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater HD	223	73%
Tony Hawk's Proving Ground	160	72%
Tony Hawk: Ride	188	52%
Top Darts	202	71%
Top Gun	198	53%
Top Gun: Hard Lock	218	45%
Top Spin 3	168	71%
Top Spin 4	203	60%
Toy Story 3	195	82%
Transformers: Dark Of The Moon	208	64%
Transformers: Fall Of Cybertron	223	73%
Transformers: War For Cybertron	194	80%
Trash Panic	181	79%
Trine	184	85%
Trinity: Souls Of Zill O'll	202	56%
Trinity Universe	194	61%
Tron Evolution	200	17%
Tumble	198	70%
Turning Point: Fall Of Liberty	165	40%
Turok	163	46%
Twisted Metal	216	68%
Two Worlds II	203	64%
UFC Undisputed 2009	180	90%
UFC Undisputed 2010	193	88%
UFC Undisputed 3	215	82%
Ultimate Marvel Vs Capcom 3	212	78%
Ultra Street Fighter IV	246	85%
Uncharted: Drake's Fortune	161	87%
Uncharted 2: Among Thieves	185	96%
Uncharted 3: Drake's Deception	212	90%
Under Siege	207	71%
Unearthed: Trail Of Ibn Battuta: Ep1	233	05%
The Unfinished Swan	225	78%
Unreal Tournament III	162	88%
Untold Legends: Dark Kingdom	151	54%
Valkyria Chronicles	173	82%
Vancouver 2010	189	76%
Vanquish	197	93%
Viking: Battle For Asgard	165	74%
Virtua Fighter 5	151	83%
Virtua Fighter 5: Final Showdown	220	90%
Virtua Tennis 3	150	91%
Virtua Tennis 4	205	79%
Wakeboarding HD	195	65%
The Walking Dead: All That Remains	240	89%
The Walking Dead: 400 Days	234	83%
Wanted: Weapons Of Fate	179	63%
Warhammer 40,000: Space Marine	210	51%
Warhawk	157	84%
Warriors: Legends Of Troy	202	14%
Warriors Orochi 3	217	59%
Watchmen: The End Is Nigh	183	55%
Way Of The Samurai 3	190	16%
Wet	184	41%
Wheelman	178	72%
Where The Wild Things Are	188	56%
White Knight Chronicles	190	55%
White Knight Chronicles II	207	49%
Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?	214	79%
WipEout HD	172	84%
Wizorb	222	78%
Wolfenstein	183	72%
Wonderbook: Book Of Spells	226	80%
Worms Collection	224	85%
Worms 2: Armageddon	198	87%
Worms Ultimate Mayhem	217	80%
WRC: FIA World Rally Championship	197	76%
WRC 2: FIA World Rally Championship	211	63%
WRC 3 FIA World Rally Championship	225	75%
WWE All Stars	204	82%
WWE Legends Of WrestleMania	178	80%
WWE 12	212	50%

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
WWE 13	225	55%
X-Blades	178	54%
XCOM: Enemy Unknown	224	94%
Thinking, planning, failing and dying is back in fashion: <i>XCOM</i> is a phenomenal reimagining of a classic title and an instant classic in its own right.		
X-Men Arcade	203	60%
X-Men Destiny	211	35%
X-Men Origins: Wolverine	179	71%
Yaiba: Ninja Gaiden Z	242	35%
Yakuza: Dead Souls	216	60%
Yakuza 3	191	80%
Yakuza 4	203	79%
Zen Pinball 2	224	90%
Zombie Apocalypse: Never Die Alone	213	69%
Zone Of The Enders HD Collection	226	81%
Zuma	182	78%

PS VITA LISTING



GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
A-Men	217	70%
Army Corps Of Hell	217	64%
Assassin's Creed III: Liberation	225	76%
Atelier Meruru: The Apprentice Of Arland	221	35%
Everybody's Golf	215	86%
BlazBlue: Continuum Shift Extend	216	85%
Call Of Duty: Black Ops Declassified	227	18%
Danganronpa: Trigger Happy Havoc	242	85%
Danganronpa 2: Goodbye Despair	249	89%
Dead Nation	201	86%
Destiny Of Spirits	244	76%
Dokuro	230	71%
Earth Defense Force 2017 Portable	230	82%
Escape Plan	216	81%
FIFA Football	216	80%
fiOw	151	90%
Flower	176	85%
Gravity Crash	187	85%
Gravity Rush	219	86%
Hotline Miami	233	85%
Hustle Kings	216	81%
Joe Danger	194	96%
Killzone: Mercenary	236	88%
LittleBigPlanet	223	93%
Little Deviants	215	69%
Lumines Electric Symphony	216	85%
MGS HD Collection	221	70%
ModNation Racers: Road Trip	215	59%
Mortal Kombat	219	83%
MotorStorm RC	217	81%
Muramasa Rebirth	234	80%
New Little King's Story	224	70%
Ninja Gaiden Sigma Plus	217	72%
Ninja Gaiden Sigma 2 Plus	230	60%
Oddworld: Stranger's Wrath HD	214	86%
Orgarhythm	230	55%
PlayStation All-Stars Battle Royale	225	80%
Persona 4 Golden	228	94%
PixelJunk Monsters	163	94%
Puddle	222	82%
Rayman Origins	216	84%
Reality Fighters	215	52%
Resistance: Burning Skies	219	54%
Ridge Racer	216	48%
Rocketbirds: Hardboiled Chicken	212	82%
Silent Hill: Book Of Memories	225	32%
Sorcery Saga: Curse of the Great Curry God	240	70%
Soul Sacrifice	232	85%
Sound Shapes	223	88%
Superfrog HD	234	41%
Super Monkey Ball: Banana Splitz	224	78%
Sumoni: Demon Arts	230	46%
Super Stardust Delta	216	84%
Tearaway	239	80%
Terraria	232	85%
Touch My Katamari	216	83%
Toukiden: The Age Of Demons	241	86%
Ultimate Marvel vs Capcom 3	216	80%
Uncharted: Fight For Fortune	227	83%
Uncharted: Golden Abyss	215	83%
Unit 13	216	67%
Velocity Ultra	233	80%
Virtua Tennis 4: World Tour Edition	215	81%
Virtue's Last Reward	227	84%
WipEout 2048	215	87%

*denotes import review

PLAYING THE PLAYLIST

Watch out! Games!



WHAT
(have they been playing?)

FFXIV

WHY (was it chosen?)
Eorzea has loads more to offer

LUKE ALBIGÉS

REGULAR READERS

WILL be shocked to see a game other than *Destiny* in this slot. But having hit level 32, I finally have time to play other games. Being the idiot I am, I've returned to another grind-heavy favourite and while I was pretty well equipped when I left the game, I've come back to find my best gear obsolete, my tanking skills all but forgotten and my quest list longer than ever. I'm actually really enjoying all the new stuff that has been added since I last played, and I'm currently working on my crafting classes – I can't run dungeons until my skills return...



WHAT
(have they been playing?)

The Walking Dead: Season 2

WHY (was it chosen?)
Looking out for Clementine...

PAUL WALKER-EMIG

IT'S TAKEN ME a long time to get around to season two of *The Walking Dead*. That's not because I didn't enjoy the first season. On the contrary, I *loved* the first season and was eager to continue the story. Unfortunately, I had to switch formats and I felt such a strong connection to the choices I had made in the first series that I couldn't bring myself to continue without them. Finally, I decided to suck it up and get on with it and I'm glad I did. It's not as good as the first season so far, but I'm still very much enjoying it.



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PROVISIONAL RATING



paube



XBOX ONE



XBOX 360

XBOX
LIVE



PS4

PS3

PC
DVD-ROM

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